THE HOUND & HORN

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Allen Tate wrote the introduction to Hart Crane's first book, *White Buildings.*

Gerald Sykes is a contributor to the *American Caravan.*

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ERRATA

(Henry Adams, Part I, Volume III, No. 3)

Page 339, line 28: *May 7, 1924* for *May 7, 1929*

Page 341, line 25: *pride* for *price*

Page 351, line 16: insert *much* between *made* and *of*

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COMMENT

NOW that everyone has uttered his "second thoughts" and "last words" on Humanism, it is possible to seek grounds for its failure. The most general is the lack of precision, of localization, of the ideas involved; verbally exact, they have been vague in reference, so that summary is almost impossible. Mr. Babbitt's disciples in the universities have repeated his formulae; his disciples in the world have passed beyond such literalism and are seeking to clarify the vagueness. The academic literals will continue to teach, and if they believe that the enunciation of empty principles will lead to great art and literature that is surely a harmless delusion. The artists and writers will continue to work; if they venture on any intellectual flights they will take off from technical problems, from difficulties inherent in their material and its mastery. When ideas serve to overcome such difficulties they have a precise reference and discussion of them is fruitful; when they spring from general reflections and embody no imagination, as is the case with Humanism, they may be acute, they may be indisputable, they may be true, but they solve no dilemmas, because they faced none concretely; they lead nowhere because they never started for a definite destination.

ACADEMIC LITERALS

THE DIAGHILEV PERIOD

I

AN AMERICAN tourist was hunting the back alleys of Venice, one hot morning in the middle of last August, for a church in which Domenico Theotocopulos must have worshipped. He saw its tower from afar, on the edge of a small canal, and passing under an arch, found a barge of black and gold moored to the church steps. Beadles in cocked hats, holding brass rods, bore wreaths into the church and he followed into the cool noon dusk. When his eyes were accustomed to the gloom, he saw opposite him a great byzantine ikonostasis. The Baptism, the Last Supper, their gesso and gilding turned bronze, glowed above a bier, blanketed with heaped-up flowers. Suddenly he became aware of mourners, and the fact that this was, indeed, a funeral. Faces, somehow familiar, ignored him as he passed out into the sunlight, and leaving, he heard the first words of the Greek Orthodox service for the dead. Not until three days later, reading the *London Times*, did he learn that he had unwittingly attended, in San Giorgio dei Greci, the obsequies of a great Russian:

"Serge Diaghilev was born in the district of Novgorod on March 19, 1872. His early career was varied, and he studied, if he did not practice, all the arts. While reading law in St. Petersburg, he turned his attention to music but took to journalism in 1897, and more especially to the criticism of art. He organized the first great exhibition of Russian art in Western Europe, founded an important journal of art (Mir Iskousstva) which lasted from 1899 to 1905, and in 1903

he was in Paris and producing Boris Godunov with a company that included Chaliapin. Thus he began his services to Russian art which he was later to extend to that of most European countries."

Serge Diaghilev, more than any other single person, was responsible for the growth and maintenance of a tradition in contemporary painting, music and dancing. Picasso is not the gold mine of 57th Street and the rue de la Boëtie, wholly because he invented cubism, but in a great measure because Diaghilev commissioned him to decorate Satie's *Parade* and de Falla's *Three Cornered Hat*, and in a succession of ballets furnished this great decorator with the chance to display himself on a grand scale. Stravinsky, Diaghilev found in a class in harmony, and, irritated because his old master Liadov was slow in scoring some Russian fairy tales, ordered *The Fire Bird*. Then followed *The Rites of Spring*, *Petrouchka*, *Pulcinella*, *Noces*, *Renard*, *King Oedipus* and *Apollo Leader of the Muses*: the works by which the composer is known. Without Diaghilev the great tradition of classical ballet dancing might have died of dry rot, or disuse. Instead, first with Fokine, Nijinsky, Pavlova, later with Massine, Dolin and Lifar he made it greater and more popular than ever before. Diaghilev was a synthesizer, a catalyst, who could image in three dimensions the perfect combination of the right dances, for the right music, in the right decor, and by right we must read inevitable.

II

The skeletal structure of classical ballet dancing was developed in France and Italy throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Stretching back to the dances before the ark, the tradition of folk dancing became stylized with usage, finally achieving a mechanical technique which allowed exact

repetition. Toe dancing was codified into a rigid system of five positions, in which the arms, accented by hieratic arrangements of hands and fingers, the legs by linear conformities of feet and toes, were made capable of weaving countless ingenious variations upon a strong formal foundation. During the nineteenth century the technique was intensified into a sterile formula. Dancing masters who had gone from Marseilles and Milan to St. Petersburg were impressed by what they saw of indigenous folk-dancing and incorporated parts of its attractive gaucherie into their curriculum. The technical excellence displayed was phenomenal. Girls were kept exercising at the bar, pointing, bending, taking their attitudes and little else for a year or two, until the master saw a hundred legs tap the same line on the floor at the same instant with an accuracy which was as sterile as it was precise. But when this amazing control of muscular perfection was put to a worthy use, in a setting which had not been stylized out of any common emotional reference, it served as a rigid framework for the ingenious variations and surprising floutings of itself, which depended on its initial strictness and strength.

Twenty-two years ago Serge Diaghilev started as the impresario of the Russian Ballet. His previous technical training in law, in esthetics, in music, his inherent gifts of taste, his consciousness of the chic, his appreciation of social snobbery and his passion for the beauty of surprise and of youth, these in a combination of brilliant energies and practical qualifications made him the isolated genius that he was. The ballet in St. Petersburg had almost petrified between the onslaughts of Italian opera and the strictures of such great classical choreographers as Petitpa and Cechetti. With Fokine as producer and Nijinsky as choreographer and premier danseur, Diaghilev instituted a Romantic revolution culminating in

Les Sylphides, 1910 (*Photo, "L'Illustration"*)

(*Thadée Slavinsky:* *Lydia Lopokhova:* *Leonide Massine*)

Les Matelots, 1925 (Rehearsal)

(*Photo, Manuel*)

Ode, 1928

(*Photo, Lipnitski*)

the first night of the *Rites of Spring*, no less full of implications than the debut of Hernani — one of those revolutions which seem to save art from its crippling ideas of perfection once in a hundred years.[1] The dances now invented were based partly upon the old tradition and partly on an archeological interest in Russian folk dancing, as echoed in the music not of Tschaikowsky, but of Rimsky, Mousorgsky and Borodine. The ballets were *Prince Igor*, *Schéhérazade*, *Thamar*, *Fire Bird* and the *Rites of Spring*. Leon Bakst with his brush strokes of oriental illusion, turned everything behind the proscenium into a conflagration of impressionistic palettes, a riot of the sensualism of stuffs and smouldering colors which must still signify to many Americans the spirit of the Russian Ballet. To us, wrapped purely in the eclectic classicism of the 1930's, the dances of fifteen years ago seem, perhaps, inflated, boisterous, and, in spirit, as creased and dusty as the old scenery in front of which they were until last year, still danced. It is true that they were very much in their own epoch. Their effectiveness was based not wholly on the inherent beauty of a perfect synthesis, but on the physical at-

[1] In Carl Van Vechten's *Music After the Great War*, there is an adequate description of the primière of the *Sacre du Printemps*, more valuable as suggesting the atmosphere of aggressive experiment which Diaghilev always managed to stir up, than as a factual description. "A certain part of the audience, thrilled by what it considered a blasphemous attempt to destroy music as an art, and swept away with wrath, began very soon after the rise of the curtain to whistle, to make cat-calls, and to offer audible suggestions as to how the performers should proceed. Others of us, who liked the music and felt that the principles of free speech were at stake, bellowed defiance. . . . The figures on the stage danced in time to music they had to imagine they heard and beautifully out of rhythm with the uproar in the auditorium. The intense excitement of a young man behind me, under which he was laboring, thanks to the potent force of the music, betrayed itself presently when he began to beat rhythmically on the top of my head with his fists. My emotion was so great that I did not feel the blows for some time. They were perfectly synchronized with the beat of the music. When I did, I turned around. His apology was sincere. We had both been carried beyond ourselves."

Nijinsky Backstage after the *Spectre de la Rose*

(*Leon Bakst, Stravinsky, Diaghilev are first three figures from left to right*)

(*Drawing by* Jean Cocteau)

traction, the almost animal appetite of their audience for color — tomato reds, sunflower yellows, grass greens, and not the monochromatic, neatly indicated decors of the years before and after. Their attraction was also partly due to the amazing physical violence of the dancers as people, in orgiastic simulacra.[2] Nijinsky leaped into the air like a sword flashed from its scabbard. The brass and clangour of Tartar emperors, arming from Kazan, bronze thighs through slashed silver pantaloons, in a tempestuous rout across the stage, evoked a fairyland which was a thousand times more satisfactory than thin puppets of heretofore, for these heroes sweated from their labors, their blood pouring out upon the white breasts of prostrate princesses in a palpable, tangible vision, separated from an audience only by music and lights.

The great star of Diaghilev's first nights was Nijinsky. Those who saw him, retain in imperishable memory of sinewy vitality, a fountainous energy and a quality of physical presence, a mysterious personal charm which has never been approximated. Whether he raped a veil as in *The Afternoon of a Faun* ("elusive being, midway between the human and the animal, he has consciousness of nothing beyond his figs, his grapes and his flute," said Cocteau. "As he smoothes with his tongue his jaw, piebald like a horse-chestnut, his quaintly

[2] In A. E. Johnson's book on the Ballet there is a detailed narrative of Schérérazade, the most generally successful of the first ballets. His powers in prose capture at least something of the essential feeling of the piece. "The fires of passion smouldering in the heart of Sobéide leap forth on the instant. A woman scorned or a woman denied — her fury is a thing few men, and least of all an emasculate poltroon can face. A frightful paroxysm shakes the panting queen. Like a tigress baulked of her prey, etc., etc. . . . .

"Palpitating with the vehemence of her expectant desires, Sobéide stands before the open portal, clutching her breasts with eyes glued to the dim recesses beyond. There is a pause, which adds a new delicious torture to her thirsty cravings; then with agile bound, light footed, there comes leaping toward her a young Negro. (Nijinsky)."

fascinating face seems to resent the weight of the horns upon his head. Could we hear him, one imagines he would laugh and bleat almost in the same breath and all the while his wrinkled brow attests his yearning to cross the border that separates instinct from intelligence,") or bounded through an open window, so high that it took six strong pairs of hands with a mattress to break his fall[3] or threaded the almost inextricable maze of the original partition of the *Rites of Spring*, he was an unforgettable artist, and it is useless for one who never saw him to attempt a further evocation of his image. His febrile brilliance spent itself like a rocket and in the tragedy of his insanity and in the great insanity of the war, Diaghilev's ballet rounded out its first chapter.[4]

III

The saga of the ballet is really fit subject for an epic. Only with a poet's license may we obtain even the palest echo of the spirit and essence of the ballet as a company. An heroic

[3] From Jean Cocteau's *Igor Stravinsky and the Russian Ballet*. "It was in 1910. Nijinsky was dancing the *Spectre de la Rose*. Instead of going to see the piece, I went to wait for him in the wings. *There it was really very good.* After embracing the young girl the spectre of the rose hurls himself out of the window. . . . and comes to earth amongst the stage-hands who throw water in his face and rub him down like a boxer. What a combination of grace and brutality! I shall always hear that thunder of applause, I shall always see that young man, smeared with grease-paint, gasping and sweating, pressing his heart with one hand and holding on with the other to the scenery, or else fainting in a chair. Afterwards, having been smacked and douched and shaken he would return to the stage, and smile his acknowledgments."

[4] In *transition*, Volume I, No. 3, there is a story called *The Silent House* by Phillipe Soupault in which there is developed a tragic description of Nijinsky "dressed in a long, dark-grey coat, a light straw hat with a black band, and thick yellow boots, very pale like those worn by hunters or chronic invalids," walking in a closed garden, guarded by his interne, or else in the room above pacing the floor to the cracked gramophone record of an "Invitation to the Valse" (The music of the *Spectre de la Rose*).

adventure, its protagonists were tragedians of the first rank. As W. A. Propert says in his valuable book, *The Russian Ballet in Western Europe:*

"That Diaghilev's enterprise should have survived the war is astonishing, and the record of his journeys between 1914 and 1918 is a convincing proof of his courage and determination. The thunderbolt fell within a week of the termination of that memorable Drury Lane season, and many of the more important members of his company hurried back to Russia. He carried his company over to America, fulfilled his engagements there and was back in Europe by the autumn of 1915. There was a wonderful little season in Paris in December, when he produced *The Midnight Sun,* and earned no less than £4000 for the Red Cross. Then away again to America in January, 1916, for three months, and after a summer spent in Spain another long season opened at New York in the autumn. Between the 16th of October and the end of February, 1917, the company danced in over fifty towns through the length and breadth of the United States. Then again back in Europe, April was spent in Italy, May in Paris and June in Spain. Between July and September they were in South America and returned finally to Europe in November, 1917, spending their time in Spain until they could get through to England, where they landed in August, 1918.

"It was a tremendous Odyssey, carried through under conditions that might have daunted the old Greek himself, and it involved no less than eight Atlantic crossings through all the perilous times of the submarine warfare."

After the war Diaghilev turned his back on Russia and on its legacy. The empire of the Romanoffs was his chief link with the east; the Renascent proletariat, replacing the ro-

mance he had made so much of, banished him to an indefinite exile. For of course the ballet's is an aristocratic realm. It depends on autocracy, absolutism, the projection of individuals against an anonymous mass. Logically enough when Diaghilev and Prokoviev produced their ballet inspired by the U. S. S. R. *The Beat of Steel*, it was rather an empty gesture; the superficial patterns of human pistons and dynamos were surprising only on first sight — and besides, Diaghilev had well exhausted any possible exploitation of the near-orient. Those who at first regretted the passing of *Sadko*, *Prince Igor* and *Schéhérazade* came to realize they were, after all, mainly necessary for their epoch and that the epoch had fulfilled itself.[5]

The impresario ranged about him for such attendant talents as fitted his hands. He went from the east to the heart and brain of the west, and with his unerring chemistry, dissolved Derain into Rossini:—behold *La Boutique Fantasque;* Matisse in Stravinsky: *The Nightingale;* Picasso in Manuel de Falla: *The Three Cornered Hat.* I must rely again on W. A. Propert whose words, so much fairer than mine, may hint at the essential qualities of the first mentioned, which was typical of Diaghilev's important change in the direction of his second period:

[5] At the time of Bakst's death Paul Morand reviewed his achievement in the light of the later non-Bakstian ballets. "It is true that his art is too often vulgar, barbaric, effective only as a blow between the eyes; but such as it is, it has now become an historical phenomenon with its fifteen years of influence upon manners, the theatre, the city, books, and music. . . . . It has been said that it was a Jewish art, with its emphasis upon raw tones, its passion for gold and precious metals, its dearth of line, its nomadic origins, its Oriental sensuality, its contempt for architectural construction. Bakst was, in fact, a Jew; and it was the great Israelite audiences that established the success of the Russian Ballet, that first great international success, marked by the boldness of the audience's dress, its immodesties, extravagant coiffures, depilated bodies, cosmetics; by that mixture of all modes to the point where one could not always distinguish between the house and the stage."

" . . . . Derain's *La Boutique Fantasque* (1919), and a gayer more exhilarating entertainment it would be difficult to imagine. His company had certainly de-Russianized themselves, and *Paris 1870* was glitteringly stamped over the whole production. . . . Here was to be the first example of the far reaching change that had come over the ballet — the work of a man who, with the zeal of a primitive, combined the science and sensibility of the twentieth century; who had come fresh to his work unspoilt by any acquaintance with stage conventions. . . . It was like the work of a ten-year-old schoolgirl, and yet the simplicity of its design was so transparently sincere, there was such a feeling of air and space everywhere — the colour of the background was so clear and cool as seen through the brown screen, and above all there were such enchanting arrangements of fruits and flowers painted on the wings, that one forgave all those yards of ugly colour and the impossible furniture."

The curtain rises on Derain's toy shop, with a huge clerk's desk; the blue shades are drawn to discover a stiff painted paddle-wheel steamer on the back drop. The fat storekeeper has his assistant, a bounding imp of a black haired boy, with eyes like shoe-buttons, hair like a mop and a moustache à la Charlot, and they dust up the shop. Ladies and gentlemen of 1870, with their fantastic children come in to buy. Demonstration of performing poodles, Russian toys, tin soldiers and a pair of can-can dancers. These last unfortunates are each bought by different families and are wrapped up to be taken away in the morning. During the night, the animals and toys come to life, assist the lovers to escape; in the morning the irate families return to discover they have been tricked, attack the storekeeper with bottle green parapluies and are routed by the resurrected denizens of the shop — exultation

of the shock-headed assistant — grands jeux; ronde, coda; rideau — and while the large outline of the plotted action comes first to the mind there are those unforgettable details; the horrified gestures of spoilt American children, the kick of the ladies to get their bustles right, the pitiful smirking swagger of the can-can dancer, the distracted tossing abandon of the storekeeper's assistant, all engendered a deliciously conscious overtone, that this is all very ridiculous, but here, in its frame, very true.

The Milieu, the setting of 1870, the introduction of the can-can dancers each has its own significance in the development of the Diaghilev ballet. Part of its charm was its constant sense of the recreation of a mood, as exemplified by an historical epoch, with an ultimate preoccupation with the present. For it was not 1870 that one saw through the enamelled lorgnons of the *Boutique Fantasque*, but a Lanvin lady of 1920 rustling her grandmother's ball dresses. Up to this time the ballet had used a subject matter that was overtly aristocratic: king, slaves and emperors, all the panoplies of princes, or at least the illuminated fairy books of princelings. Now it assumed a higher aristocracy, the remote and special aristocracy of the chic, the familiar texts of the commonplace, seized out of their context, transported to the plane of selection in recreation, and thus rehabilitated.

IV

The development of the ballet is the development of choreography, however much painting and music may contribute to its atmospheric presentation, and by a summary reconsideration of the principal choreographers of the Diaghilev dynasty one can gain an approximate idea of their ultimate achieve-

ment. Mikhail Fokine directly inherited the classical dance. Says André Levinson, that invaluable well of information on such matters: "The classical dance can be succinctly characterized by the use of beats on the points and beats of *elevation.* It contains the traditional symmetrical forms of the *pas de deux,* a choreographical poem in three verses, in a rigid frame work:—the *adagio,* which is a chain of movements and pirouettes by the ballerina supported by the dancer; the two *variations,* that of the ballerina and that of the dancer, whose more restricted art is confined to leaps, the entrechat and series of pirouettes; lastly the *coda,* in which the dancer alternates with the ballerina a succession of accelerated measures that mount up to the *presto* and end in a whirlwind of movements and dizzy complicated turns, crossing the stage diagonally." This of course may have the background of the corps de ballet, whose evolutions are foil and background for the principal dancers. Fokine invented *Les Sylphides* (*Romantic Reverie in one act*) one of the most beautiful of classic ballets in this formal idiom. One remembers swans swimming in late twilight, only the thunder of their wings is muted to swishings of long *tutus,* as paired ladies revolve in a inexpressible gravity of consecutive action in the midst of a shadowy park. But Fokine, with the customary violence of one who so well appreciates the tiresome tradition of his education became a most passionate revolté against it. He embraced the gospel of Isadora with all his body and mind and did his best to inculcate this freedom into the Royal Ballet School. Propert again: "*The Ballet d'Action* in Russia up to 1900 still retained its old form, the story being told by gesture and the dances being treated as interludes, more or less illustrative. By judiciously complicating the plot and multiplying the auxiliary characters, by adding a procession here

and there, and, if possible an apotheosis it was not difficult to spin it out to the regulation four or five acts." Came the Duncan: "She told of the ecstasy of the opening flower and of spirits attuned to the music of the spheres, and in the end her Greek draperies acquired all the significance of a prophet's mantle. . . . . While Fokine disapproved of her indifference to technique he equally disapproved of the others for the misuse they made of it. So he set about to create his own ideals. He imagined a ballet whose romance should go hand in hand with high accomplishment and where the unity of aim of the single dancer should inform the movements of the whole company." Fokine as a reformer was invaluable. As an artist he gave us *Petrouchka* and *Les Sylphides*, but it rested with his followers to rid the ballet of its ingenious tedium, its lack of integration between acted episodes, and those danced and the overemphasis on an elaboration of purely decorative action.

To Vaslav Nijinsky is really due the credit for that specialized quality of dancing which was the eventual contribution of Diaghilev's Ballet. First in his own dances in *Petrouchka* and *Jeux*, later in the *Afternoon of a Faun* and the *Sacre du Printemps* he created an intensity of abstracted intellectual physicality[6] which the rest have developed, modified into

[6] From Cocteau's Notes on the Ballets in the *Decorative Art of Léon Bakst* by Arséne Alexandre, London, 1913. Nijinsky in *Carnaval* "Half Hermes, half harlequin, cat and acrobat by turns, now frankly lascivious, now slyly indifferent, and all the time the school boy up to every trick the turned-down collar of his dress suggests, as emancipated from the control of the laws of gravity as he is mathematically exact in the elaboration of his antic graces. The embodiment of mischief and desire, arrogance and self-satisfaction and a hundred things beside, with the drollest little nods of his head and strange sidelong glances from the shelter of his lids, one shoulder held higher than the other and the cheek bent to meet it, his left hand on his hip, his right palm outstretched. Nijinsky danced his way through *Carnaval* to a din of uninterrupted applause."

something less than its original purity. In addition to the contribution of a great individual technician and the gift of his quality as a person, Nijinsky incorporated Fokine's knowledge of the classical ballet, with his subsequent revolt from it and in addition something of Jacques Dalcroze's eurythmic dancing. If I seem to lean too heavily on Mr. Propert's admirable book, I can only say that it is better to quote him frankly than to do him the injustice of a restatement. "In the *Sacre*[7] we see for the first time the polyrythmic dancing that Dalcroze had suggested. Nijinsky illustrated it by his setting one group of dancers to beat out softly the contrapuntal accompaniment of a theme which was being directly and more forcibly danced by another set."

"Technically the ballet was of extreme interest. It required great courage on the part of Nijinsky to discard every traditional grace that we had learned to expect. . . . . Instead of arms moving in rippling curves we saw them strained rigidly downwards or as rigidly bent at the elbow, and instead of the silence of feet that had seemed scarcely to touch the ground they flew over, we heard the stamping and shuffling of insistant shoes."

Nijinsky lived to originate the idea of the ballet as an organism broken up into interacting members, dancing in relation each to itself and to each other, keeping the time of its unit in relation to the great pulse of the whole. Contrary to what might be expected this does not present the effect of confusion, disordered patches of irrelevant and over-active

[7] From Muriel Draper's *Music at Midnight;* description of the first London performance. "The sight of human beings moving in an abstract geometric design that became a symbol of eternal emotions, beyond-human in its effect, increased the force with which the music invaded you. When it ceased, people broke and ran, sat motionless and unapproachable, cried with rage and assaulted sensibilities. (You call that *art* do you? You call it *music?* 'My God' rushed to the bar for a drink or tried to laugh it away.)"

limbs, but rather a subtle shifting of an everchanging pattern which weaves triply a rhythm, movement, and color into a human tapestry of ordered and profound complexity. His feverish activity in the invention of three ballets in a year and a half at the age of twenty-three besides his insistent appearances on the stage finally cracked him, but it provided Massine, Balanchine and Lifar with a contribution of combinations and an idiom no less important than the original five positions.

V

Fokine freed the ballet from the chains of a sterile academism; Nijinsky gave it the language of an intellectual complexity; it was left to Leonid Massine then at the age of eighteen to integrate the gifts of his predecessors. Massine's first great contribution was in *Parade*, a ballet in one act by Jean Cocteau; music by Eric Satie, scenery and costumes by Pablo Picasso; produced in 1917. The literary and philosophical background of the ballet is sufficiently complicated to justify a quotation from Cocteau's own description of it.[8] For *Parade* was the *Sacre* of the Middle Diaghilev period — the period of the Parisian *dadas*, the heirs of Guillaume Appollinaire — which resulted eventually in such more pretentious ballets as Nabokoff's *Ode*. Cocteau is perennially occupied with the alchemy of the familiar, the rehabilitation of the commonplace. The consciousness of one's own epoch so amazingly acute in the twentieth century, reaches its apogee in him. With Satie and Picasso he wished to present to us a poem of ordinaries, of such usual types that only by their isolation and caricature are they surprised out of banality, and in their escape lies our interest. The mood of

[8] The Collaboration of *Parade* from "Cock and Harlequin," by Jean Cocteau.

Parade is that of the exterior of a provincial fair; the platform outside side-show booths before the exhibition starts. It is the mood of the commencement of all harangues, specious, but tacitly specious, and the audience as well as the actors are painfully conscious of the deception.

"*For Reality Alone, even when well concealed, has power to arouse emotion.*

"The Chinaman pulls out an egg from his pigtail, eats and digests it, finds it again in the toe of his shoe, spits fire, burns himself, stamps to put out the sparks, etc. . . . .

"The little girl mounts a race-horse, rides a bicycle, quivers like pictures on the screen, imitates Charlie Chaplin, chases a thief with a revolver, boxes, dances a rag-time, goes to sleep, is shipwrecked, rolls on the grass on an April morning, buys a kodak, etc.

"As for the acrobats . . . . the poor stupid agile acrobats — we tried to invest them with the melancholy of a Sunday evening after the circus when the sounding of *Lights Out* obliges the children to put on their overcoats again, while casting a last glance at the 'ring.'

"Erik Satie's orchestra abjures the vague and the indistinct. It yields all their grace, without pedals. It is like an inspired village band.

"I composed, said Satie modestly, a background for certain noises which Cocteau considers indispensable in order to fix the atmosphere of his characters."

Here indeed was something else again. Suggestive and atmospheric, *Parade* had perhaps more to do with poetry and philosophy than dancing but it was the seed from which the full-blown flower of the ballet would at last blossom and die. Here was no quaintness of such a work as the *Boutique Fantasque*. The quality of the strangeness here, its peculiar

"quaintness" was a provincial nostalgia, a love and a loathing for the contemporary moment, the epoch of the daily paper and the telegraph, in itself sufficiently diffuse as to be generally incomprehensible—but in its effect extremely powerful. Much of the dancing here was allowed to disintegrate into ponderous shufflings, the painting into chaos and the music into a series of negligible noises; — but in its exquisite snobbery, in its ecstasy of precious eclectism, it presupposed the culmination of whole traditions of all the arts, to give point and pathos to their perversion here. And about this time, in spite of its *succés de estime*, its comparative financial success, and its crowded houses, the professional wise-acres started prophesying the ultimate downfall of the ballet or announcing its death as a fait accompli. But Diaghilev was usually cleverer than his critics. His excursions into the eccentric were guided by a prescience of style that was uncanny. Perhaps he created the ensuing style. It surely followed his wake with extraordinary alacrity. Diaghilev still kept *Igor* and *Sylphides* in his repertory, he still had his troupe dance *Carnaval* and *Petrouchka*, *The Afternoon of a Faun* and the *Sacre*. But the public, to make up for their original antagonisms, clutched their hard earned preferences all the tighter to their habitual taste and were reluctant to accept any further innovation. The lesson of the past in relation to experiment seems never to be learned. Perhaps the initial antagonism provides the spring of release for the new work. At any rate Diaghilev followed *Parade* with such ballets as *Romeo and Juliet*, the rehearsal of a ballet in itself; with *Pastorale*, the filming of a moving picture, in which the premier danseur entered on a clever bicycle as a telegraph messenger. His excursions into native iconography in England were perhaps less fortunate but surely as elaborate. In *The Triumph of Neptune*

Diaghilev, the Sitwells and the scenery of Pollock's passementerie theatres of the early Victoria, evolved a ballet lacking the distinction of similar French creations. Perhaps the English legend itself wanted the kind of raciness to which Diaghilev was accustomed. This, only to show that he was by no means unerring or always successful. His England is the usual decorative England of the continental — stuffy, suggestive of wet tweeds, and foggy afternoons, bound volumes of Punch, Dickens; later of du Maurier. *Le Romantisme puéril d'un peuple des grands enfants rieurs, querelleurs et crédules est admirablement rendu,* says M. André Levinson, *par les décors, coloriages ombres à la plume, imagerie naive agrandie a l'échelle de la scène.* But in passing it is only fair to say that it was England and not France which supported the ballet in the last days of its existence, and it was England and not France that had talked of a national home for the ballet had Diaghilev lived.

Massine was also responsible for two ballets which combined a felicity of dramatic action with a grace of choreography that had not been seen before. The *Good Humored Ladies* retained the wit of Goldoni but never resorted to the archeology of a mere commedia dell'arte and the *Three Cornered Hat* more than recalls Alcaron, but it is a dramatic dance, rather than a mimed play. For many these combinations of continuous coherent action marked the height of invention in the ballet. It was surely a comprehensible, beautiful and intelligent expression in itself, and these ballets never tired in repetition, but the quality of invention they expounded was shown so exhaustively and inevitably in these two ballets, that it was immediately obvious that the development of choreography lay in other directions.

Massine's most fortunate invention was, perhaps, *Les Mate-*

lots, music by Auric, decor by Pruna — and as originally danced with Lopokova, Danilova, Slavinsky and Wizikowsky is — with *Apollo*, *The House Party*, *The Cat* and *Sylphides*—in the top hierarchy of the later Diaghilev repertoire. The stage had simple curtains of dull red, brown, blue, and side-strips of white. A large cube like an enormous toy block had its four sides painted with cupids, lovers, a ship, a lonesome lass, which, turning, accentuated the incident, giving the narrative key as the action progressed. It was danced by six people alone. The young girl, her girl-friend, sailors and a musician who lead the final triumphant dancing-march with a tin-fork and spoon. The Matelots are Parisian blue-jackets; blue and white barred shirts, blue cap with the red pom-pom and tight, revealing trousers. The girl is a Catholic maiden of passive charm and haughty receptivity; her confidante an eager wench, a matter-of-fact shop front lass. Its simple plot — of betrothal, farewell, reappearance in disguise (three attachable beards and a pipe), the test of devotion and the triumph of love is the basis for the action. All the otherwise inexpressible, romantic charm attendant on seafaring men from Ulysses and Sinbad to Ishmael and any common seamen on Riverside Drive of a Sunday afternoon, their loose leggedness, bravado, their talent for gaming, the breadth and gesture of their leer, thumb back, low grin, legs out, find a frame, a defining stylization here. The movements are abrupt, surprising, yet always bear some implication or reference to natural gestures, whether the sailors dance with deal chairs, or slap imaginary cards on the ground, or hitch their pants or support their girls with that ghostly echo of a posture which betrays the rigidity of the classic regimen beneath it all. Massine had taken the greatest pains in the episodic transitions, the hint of comedy, the suspicion of sad-

The Cat, 1927 Serge Lifar and Alice Nikitina

(*Serge Lifar*)

The Cat: Final Scene

(*Photo, Manuel*)

(*Serge Lifar*)

The Prodigal Son, 1929

(*Photo, Lipnitski*)

ness, the nostalgia of expectancy, so that the dramatic unit is a symphony of the poetry in human situation.

Massine at present designs the dances for Roxy's ballet in New York. In this position of considerable importance, it is a pity he has not more power to exercise his amazing ingenuity and his splendid talents as a great original dancer. At least he has been given the chance to arrange the dances for the League of Composers' production of the *Rites of Spring* this April. Massine was the first of the "clever" choreographers.[9] A perfect classical dancer, he took an almost pedantic delight in perverting or satirizing the old formal steps. He introduced a kind of stylish rigidity, a conscious gaucherie, which his followers were often to transmit into an ingenious pattern of meaningless surprises as empty as the original academic formula on which it was based.

VI

And then there was Diaghilev himself, a personality of the utmost distinction, combining in his fantastic character elements of practical facility, capacity for action and an exu-

[9] A typical example of the more outrageous Massine, the Massine at whose door some laid the decadence of the ballet was the production of *Mercure* at Beaumont's Soirée de Paris — described in the *Criterion* by W. H. Shaw. "*Mercure* left one uncertain. The effect produced on the first night audience was indicative. The younger generation led by Louis Aragon became so excited that they leapt from their seats, running through the theatre to the loge of the Comte de Beaumont, screaming in menacing tones 'Vive Picasso! Vive Picasso,' as if uncertain whether to thank or damn him for presenting anything so thrilling. . . . The curtain rose on a tableau representing night in a manner entirely new to Picasso, an abstract composition made of canvas and wire. The three graces were done by three mechanical figures which were many times as large as the dancers who carried them across the stage. The dance of Chaos was executed by a group of dancers entirely covered by different colored tights, reaching even over their faces, crawling across the stage, supporting other dancers on their heads and backs."

berant invention which made the ballet possible. M. Henry Prunière described him thus in his memorial written at the time of his death: "Those who did not know him cannot imagine the extraordinary attraction of this big, snub-nosed man, with the enormous head, the black hair parted with a large white lock, heavy jaws, sensual lips, fine eyes of velvet darkness. He wore a monocle and had a slouching walk like the Monsieur de Charlus portrayed by Marcel Proust." It was inevitable that a legend should have grown up about him in his life, and of necessity it was on a grand scale parallel to his creations. He was reputed to be at once the wickedest and kindest man in Europe, both the stupidest, the most vulgar, the shrewdest and the most smart. Perhaps by quoting Lydia Lopokova who knew him better than most, one can realize some segment of his mercurial temperament. "Then there was his cunning with which he knew how to combine the excellent with the fashionable, the beautiful with the *chic*, and revolutionary art with the atmosphere of the old regime. Perhaps this corresponded to something in his own nature. In spite of his love for the *dernier cri* and the emancipation of his taste, no one could ever have called Diaghilev a 'highbrow.' He was an orthodox-believer, and devoted slave of Emperors and Kings. Indeed, he was a convinced snob, and it was not only thoughts of the box office which made him so spry and contented when the King of Spain, the Duke of Connaught or even the Aga Khan was in the theatre! He was superstitious; charms, potions, love-philtres were not entirely outside his mentality." He indulged himself equally in his passion for puppies, for Machiavellian intrigue, and for four-handed arrangements of Glinka and Cimarosa. In trying to recollect those qualities which made his success possible Lopokova first cites his extraordinary authority, as

ruthless as the traditional Romanoff, whose blood was supposed to flow in his veins. As she says, it was no easy task to get such a three ring circus as Rimsky, Stravinsky, Prokoviev, Debussy, Ravel, Poulenc, Auric, Milhaud, De Falla, Respighi, Strauss and Mattise, Braque, Dérain, Laurencin, Utrillo, Gris, Rouault, Picasso, Bakst, Chirico, and Pavlova, Karsavina, Bolm, Nijinsky, Mordkin, Dolin and Lifar to work together. The difficulties in the way of savage professional jealousies, procrastination from both musical and artistic supports, and recurrent and insistent bankruptcy which Diaghilev surmounted, are heroic chapters in his saga, which, so vital to his success, will of necessity be forgotton. Naturally he made enemies. His increasing power had become dictatorial. He could make the reputation of a painter, a musician or a dancer in a single night. "And lastly," wrote Lopokova, "as the force without which I think, the rest could not have been enough, there was the personal motive of his successive attachments to Nijinsky, Massine, and Lifar. It was his unceasing preoccupation to educate, inspire, and develop the natural talents of these dancers and choreographs to the utmost limit of their possiblities. It would be half true to say that all this energy was exercised, the great Opera Houses of the world rented, and the most famous musicians and artists commissioned in order that a splendid *ensemble* might be created for their setting off, that glory should surround their triumphs and the most perfect opportunities be offered for their self-expression." Muriel Draper in regretting the passing of the ballet gives an unforgettable picture of Diaghilev at a rehearsal. "Abortive democratic principles, the socialization of the arts for the standardized benefit of the prolific 'brotherhood' of man, the lack of one great figure to dominate so many interrelated parts of the world as have been thrown pell-mell

together, all these currents have accelerated the temporary eclipse of the grand scale. . . . They are losing the code, and with a universal increase of intelligence and technical virtuosity that is in almost exact inverse ratio to standards of value, there is little left that can be presented on the grand scale. What there is of it Diaghilev captured and salvaged. I have sat with him in almost empty theatres during rehearsal and heard him say to the chef d'orchestre very politely —

"'*Non, non, non maître. Pas tout à fait ça. . . . Pas tout à fait ça. Est-ce que je me trompe, ou est-ce que ce n'est pas un tout petit trop. . . . trop lent? En tout cas, essayons-le un to-o-out petit peu plus vite. C'est bien possible que j' ai tort.*' Or to a dancing figure on the stage, '*Non, Non, Non ma chère petite. Non. L'estomac n'est pas fait de bois — attendez, attendez, écoutez-moi — ni de caoutchouc. Non, chère, non. L'estomac est fait de la chair, aprés tout, de la bonne chair.*' And so on and so on until by a series of almost chemical emanations rather than actual directions, he had changed the atomic structure of bodies, scenes and sounds."

"I once asked him if he could express in words the exact thing of which he was possessed that brought about this subtle synthesis of flesh and light and tone vibration.

"'*Je ne sais pas, je ne sais pas, ma chère Muriel, je ne sais pas. Un toouout petit peu de la conaissance, peut être, et beaucoup de l'amour . . . . Je ne sais pas.*'"

Daighilev had his court and for twenty years at least he was king of the European arts. A beneficent despot, the power of his unified and isolated authority, with the exception of the Bavarian King's Wagnerian interlude, has parallels only in the eighteenth century and before, when Boucher and LeBrun created an academy and a taste. It is something to have recreated the art of dancing, to have given painting

practically its only escape from easel-painting, to have provided music with the proper channels to exploit its polyphonic dissonances and return to melodic line. Diaghilev did more. He created a taste in and of his own period, he set up the only referable standards of aesthetic excellence in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and provided the only great market for a unified creative endeavor. Two things he loved to idolatry: the physical aura of youth in action; the intellectual brilliance of surprise. He was a king, who created not empires, but a world, who defined with a synthesis of men and their arts, with the transitions of movement in mass, color and music a nobility that had no other way of being demonstrated. Diaghilev's style was more than a modish fashion, an ephemeral chic. Unique in itself, it expressed the same aristocracy of perception and intensity, usually with tragic overtones, that all great artists have known and erected. While watching a ballet one could say simply, "There lies nobility, grace, perfection." With words this style is definable, but the very symbols that read abstractions traduce its essence. In the grave sobriety, the untiring effortless fountain of Mozart, in the ironic and passionate delicacy of Greco; in such gay and heroic characterizations as Mercutio's and Hotspur's; in the cadences of Racine and Congreve, and in the elegance of Wren and Bernini, there is that living, tremendous exuberance of human divinity which so often the Diaghilev ballet tangibly and triumphantly expressed. In recreating the past whether in Russia, or Versailles, in seizing from the present its most precious seconds whether at a house party,[10] a tennis

[10] *Les Biches*, choreography by Nijinska (sister of the dancer), music by Poulenc, décor by Marie Laurencin, was surely one of the happiest of all ballets, the perfect definition of the charm of contemporaneity in relation to tradition. The music with its lovely parody of Caesar-Franck, the boys in sashed blue bathing suits, the ladies in pink, grey and black garden party dresses; the

game (Nijinsky and Debussy's *Jeux*), or a factory, Diaghilev chose the best of life's stream, presented it to those living who could best receive it, in the most fitting of all possible forms.

VII

If the choreography of the first Russian ballets was characterized by its massive emphasis on colorful loose dancing, chaotic gesture, a narrative sequence in action and a romantic reaction from the strictures of the five classical positions, the last Russian ballets were distinguished by the reverse. Its development had run the logical gamut from the intense and reactionary romanticism of Mikhail Fokine to the intense and reactionary classicism of Georges Balanchine (Balanchavadze). For it was he and not Massine who determined the indicative line of the last ballets, although he depended on Massine as much as Massine originally on Fokine. In its first years the by-words of ballet were "grace," "beauty of movement," "line," meaning roughly, smooth transitions from one balanced position to another. Under Massine, with his incorporations of various extraneous influences, such as music-hall[11] and musical comedy dancing, this grace was replaced by a certain abruptness, clipped gestures, strained final posi-

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entrance also of Nemtchinova so well described by Cocteau;—the type of the perfect entrance. "L'entrée de Nemtchinova est proprement sublime. Lorsque cette petite dame sort de la coulisse, sur ses pointes, avec de longues jambes, un justaucorps trop court, la main droite, gantée en blanc, mise prés de la joue comme pour un salut militaire, mon coeur bat plus vite ou s'arrête de battre. Ensuite, un gout sans flechissement combine les pas Classiques et les gestes neufs."

[11] In Cocteau's *Boeuf sur le Toit*, the three Fratellinis, star clowns of the Cirque d'Hiver, were taken over to mime the leading roles. How admirable an American ballet would be, music by Cole Porter, with the addition of Clayton, Jackson and Durante, whose precision, tempo and irony approximate the later Russian ballets in essence more than anything else in America.

tions, so awkward in themselves that they immediately and satirically recalled the smooth attitudes which they burlesqued. Generally taken to be awkward and gauche, they seemed to many, rather, stylish, pointed, accentuating, accenting those gestures which in their customary slippery sequence had lost any isolated meaning. Massine was accused of designing ballets with an excess of movement, in so much as the eye never was at leisure. His introduction of acrobatics as in *Mercure* was generally deplored. Such vulgarisms were not only displeasing to the smoothly trained eye, but they *ruined the dancers* for such delicate work as in the classical *Sylphides*, which is to say that Schönberg or Satie ruins one's fingers for Chopin or Tschaikowsky. But Massine's real forte was in his comic scenes, the Italian and Spanish deceptions, the barbed wit, and brilliant personal deceit of Goldoni and Alcaron.

Balanchine's triumphs were the *Cat*, the *Prodigal Son*, the *Ball* and *Apollo, Leader of the Muses*. The ballet disintegrated after Diaghilev's death, and perhaps circumstances will not allow the full development of this brilliant choreographer, who must certainly have developed into one of the ablest of all Diaghilev's designers, for not only was his energy and invention prodigious — but he well understood the dangers attendant on the unintelligent if entertaining implications of the "clever," acrobatic Massine dance, and in the *Cat* and *Apollo* he produced two of the finest of all the ballets since their inception. His dances had the spareness, the lack of decoration which is by no means a lack of refinement, the splendid capacity to display individual gesture against a background of unrythmical massed gesture. Sometimes his ingenuity ran away with him, as in the *Prodigal Son* when four lines of dancers are ranged as on a grandstand, and their

hands shoot out like the struck letters of a typewriter in a sequence which is distinguished only as a surprise. Or as in the same ballet, when the shaven men pair off back to back, then slide down until they are sitting against each other on air, and scuttle off sideways like a battalion of crabs. These of course were intended as semi-satirical accents, but they had the same undesirable effect as an over-elaborate image in a poem, which throws off the continuous emphasis of the piece as a whole. It is true he engaged in acrobatics, and influences from the music hall as well. But he had an excellent precedent for such borrowings. Did not Nijinsky and Fokine borrow from Dalcroze and Isadora, and Massine from Spanish folk dances; and the can-can of the Moulin de la Galette; and the Valser of the Prater. The Ballet of Balanchine was more difficult to follow, perhaps, required more of an effort, in so much as the human eye accepts more readily easy variations, just as the human ear accustoms itself more readily to tones in transitions bounded by the more obvious tonal intervals. Extremely apropos of Balanchine are the words of M. Valerian Svetloff: "I have always maintained that an art fixed immovably in its forms is doomed. I have said that Fokine, by his great talent, has stirred the classicism of Petipa out of its inertia, has given it new life, for classicism is the source of the art of the ballet." The last period of the ballet was and must be considered a period of transition, not of decadence. Balanchine in the *Cat* and in *Apollo* was leading out of mere ingenuity into a revivified, purer, cleaner classicism. He had drawn on his predecessors, and with the utilization of his own peculiar invention, had created a classical ballet as pure as *Sylphides* or the *Swan Lake,* but with more depth of emotional intensity. Who having seen it will ever forget the *Cat?* When the curtain rose on Gabo and Pevsner's construction in

mica, steel and black oil cloth, a group of young men arranged in tandems of four, bore on their collective backs, their leader, Lifar, the new Nijinsky. The music of Henry Sauget *Je ne suis pas de mon époque*, he said:—it is indeed rather that of a more acrid Offenbach—crashed out the chords of a prancing entrance and the human chariot deposited its load in the centre of the stage. The young man prays Aphrodite, an implacable divinity of isinglass and white, to suffer his beloved, a cat, to come to life. His prayer is granted and thence, Nikitina, her *tutu* covered with a layer of isinglass, floats on to the scene in an entrance of exquisite, and indescribable delicacy, gravity and precision. The dances are of the older sort, combinations of attitude, entrechat, rond de jambe, pas de basque, etc., of the strict regime. But with what tragic overtones is this rigid idiom invested, when Aphrodite to test the love of the cat-girl sends a mouse across the stage. She reverts to type, following it off the floor to assume her white mittens and mask of cat. How desperately the young man is caught by his overwhelming grief, how he shivers his life away, until he falls on his side, head painfully unrelaxed off the ground in rigor-mortis. Then his companions file in, bearing skeletons of great shields, whose shifting outlines, more than their own bodies describe his funeral march, and he is borne off, over their heads, music, setting, dancing, maintaining an atmosphere of pure tragedy, an exaltation of loss which can only be described as Attic.

Apollo, Leader of the Muses was even sparer, more remote. The god with hair of gilt enamel, chitoned in crimson silk, danced with Terpsichore, Polymnia and Calliope, each dressed by Chanel in the most touching of divine chiffons, cinctured by striped Charvet cravats, as perennially fashionable in the faubourg St. Germain as on the uplands of Olym-

pus. Here were the old pas d'action, variations and combinations ending in the customary apotheosis, when the sun god's harnessed chariot comes out of the sky for him.

There is no plot. The inspiring of the Muses is a sufficient subject for dances in the old style, with all the emphasis on easy formal transition, a delicacy in the extended line of the body that is by no means a reversion to nineteenth-century choreography, for just as Stravinsky's music transcended Delibes and Tschaikowsky, through the *Sacre* or no matter what, so Balanchine has transcended Petipa, by way of *Prince Igor*, *Les Matelots* and the *Boutique Fantasque*. Always in the last analysis the classical dance is the most satisfactory, its cold multiplication of a thousand embroideries, divested of the personal, if more romantic charm of pantomime—never become cloying. One may love a ballet of surprise just as much, perhaps, after the first astonishment at decor or invention wears off, but in ballets like *Apollo*, the slight crassness that accompanies elaborate conceit never detracts from the nobility of the unerring linear architecture. This ballet more than any other indicated the direction of Balanchine's ultimate attack. Lifar, the premier danseur, famous for his acrobatics, had proclaimed his decided attraction not to the ingenious complications of the *Ball* and the *Prodigal Son* but to the classical choreography of the Masters Petipa, Legat and Cechetti. This winter he arranged and danced Beethoven's *Prometheus* at the Opera in Paris which gives some glimmer to the future of the dance.

For to many the future of the dance is very black indeed. To be sure there is an enormous interest in dancing today; witness the extravagant success of the Denishawns, Kreutzberg, Argentina and the score of Sunday evening entertainers foreign and indigenous. The Denishawns have some interest

in their reproduction of eastern dances, but purely the interest of a good copy; Kreutzberg has only the subjective fascination of post-war German painting; of Pierrot-Lunaire. Argentina defines the limits of a perfection which is by nature of itself, limited. The rest, such dancers as attempt "reforms" in the classical ballet—Wigman, Bodenwieser, Laban, and their American parallels — lack the two chief necessities of fine dancing—a formal training and a sense of the aristocracy of style. Solo dancers are never as effective as with the background of a ballet, and the aimless emotional vacuity, the appalling facility of loose gesture under the guise of free dancing that we find in most Americans are far less interesting than the precision of Albertina Rasch or a Tiller corps.

As M. Valerian Svetloff says: "Talent is an all-embracing spirit, it is contented with seven notes, seven primary colours and five positions in dancing; with these it will perform marvels in art, such marvels as will remain young when the present generation, and those that follow it, are in their graves." The classical ballet, once its idiom is incorporated in the mind of the dancer, transcends the heavy self-consciousness of naturalistic dancing, which is always intent on translating the postures of "natural" walking and running into the language of the dance. But in walking and running for example, the feet and hands are blunt ends, to arrest the flow of lines; by a stylized lengthening of them as in ballet, the eye carries the linear transition easily. For classical ballet dancing is at once the most rigid and elastic of bodily expression. It is the Catholic absolute dogma of the dance — to be sure there are the Calvinists, the Christian Scientists, and lesser creeds without the law; messengers of beauty in batik draperies, bearing paper hydrangeas in a card-board urn. They lack the hardness, the muscular accuracy, the coördinated precision of those

dancers trained at the bar. Their repertoire is always looser, less coherent, less integrated. The world needs a new Diaghilev to reintegrate the arts, but to save dancing in particular from a facile oblivion.

It is, of course, somewhat pointless to attempt the description of the ballet to one who has never seen it, whose only connection with formal dancing is the "prologue" to a moving picture or the interlude of a musical comedy. It is hard to convey the feeling of loss one has, having seen it, fearing never to see it again. But it is exactly the same as if one were deprived of a literature, a whole language of expression; for instance to wake up one morning and know one could never read Tolstoi or Proust or Shakespeare again, never to see Poussin, Greco, or Cézanne, never again Gabrielle's Garde Meuble on the Place de la Concorde, or Chartres, or San Marco, never hear again the B Minor Mass or *Don Giovanni*.

VIII

And the social reverberations of the ballet were not wholly negligible; in the minds of some at least there were serious moral implications. If at the first great nights at the Chatelet the audience included Geraldine Farrar, M. Briand, Isadora Duncan, Gabriel Fauré, Grand Duke Pavel, Caillaux, Saint Saëns, Octave Mirabeau, the last nights in London were beheld by an equivalent aristocracy of art, letters, and politics. During the intermissions, Miss Sitwell held her court on Covent Garden stairs, to block the upward passage of the Poet Laureate. Prince George sits in a corner with an unknown lady elaborately unobserved. The latest meteors down from Oxford and Cambridge swell the large and androgynous cohorts of intelligent enthusiasts, and these have startled the

jeremiads of that nervous Savonarola, Mr. Whyndam Lewis. He fulminated against the ballet as the ultimate snobbish and vapid bagatelle of high-Bohemia, the vile afterbirth of the purple nineties. But what Mr. Lewis really objected to was the sight of a great many more or less wicked young people enjoying themselves, contrasting (favorably, no doubt) the formal perfection of the ballet with the formal corruption of their own lives. The gossip that buzzed around its corridors was as lively, as professional, as malicious as at Trianon. One can only hope that there were St. Simons on both sides of the channel during the last twenty years. For, S. (a delightful dancer of some seasons ago) disappeared with a Finnish lady and contracted leprosy: rewards of the narrow path. There is being kept in abeyance a dancer greater than Nijinsky to replace the present favorite. He was found on the top of a Steppe and has been educated at Diaghilev's expense for fifteen years. Stravinsky's orthodox Mass has been refused. Marcovich, the sixteen-year-old musician, will definitely emerge from his obscurity to replace Stravinsky. The composer in a dudgeon has withdrawn the rights on all his ballets. Diaghilev is bankrupt, only the generosity of Lord Beaverbrook keeps him at Covent Garden; Stravinsky's Mass will be produced in Monte Carlo in the spring. In spite of the antagonistic critical silence in all the Beaverbrook press, the present season is, bless God, a financial success; now X, Y, Z, and so on can be paid. But the extraordinary thing about this gossip was the high degree of technical and personal information it presupposed. The audiences of the ballet had been reared in it. They were as willing to talk about an entrance, a new invention or elision in the choreography, as to scandalize about the dancers. There was no necessity of explanatory lectures, program notes. And the intelligence, the

quickness to perceive, the willingness to follow wherever adventures of the mind, the ear, the eye led, made possible amazing voyages in invention, and all the explorations of Diaghilev and his ballet. Equally on the stage, the insistence on a hierarchy of social values accomplished marvels. There was the implicitly accepted favorite of Diaghilev. There may or may not have been accompanying rancor behind the scenes, the feeling that not merit alone had accomplished a meteoric rise. But on the stage, when good dancing was to be done, there was an intentness of purpose, a passionate intensity at impersonalized abstract perfection, unalloyed by the intrusion of emotional competition. There was no attempt at outdancing one's partner, as so often on our stage actors outplay their supporting company. All the dancers had an exquisite realization of their place in the time, the dress, the atmosphere of the ballet, and of their place, their tempo, their spiritual attitude in dancing. Merely because when lined up at the time of curtain calls the premier danseurs were so frequently smothered with bouquets of carnations, the ladies were no less gracious or adorable for accepting the young men's flowers, torn from their more tangible tributes. The recognition of the proud filling each, in their way, of their proper place, in every relation personal and artistic was that religion, which was the style of the ballet.

The style the Russian ballet embodied was to be sure a peculiar and restricted kind of style, a style of manners, an aristocracy of charm, a selection of all the noblest and most desirable qualities to despite life's darkness, in an eternal living definition of the qualities which we find great in painting, sculpture, music and letters. Words fail at every turn, and one can only rely on such inscribed and immediate beacons to parallel the qualities here to be inferred. The style, the aris-

tocracy of charm the ballet knew so well was known by Poussin in his *Inspiration of the Poet;* Manet in his *Olympia* and Seurat in the *Grande Jatte* felt the style of contemporaneity which had links with all greatness in the past, and the power of such great projection into the future. The graciousness, the swing, the delicacy of such a style was realized by the unknown attic sculptor of the Berlin Goddess bearing a pomegranate; most fittingly in Carpeaux's *Danse*. The grandeur of its kinetic and noble sobriety Monteverde inscribed in *Orfeo;* its playfulness, its geniality Mozart interlined within *Les Petits Riens*. But describing the ballet is more fatuous than even attempting to paint pictures with words. How can one ever suggest the delicacy of pause, the void in action, that gives dance its accent; the vision of arms and legs in exquisite interplay from symmetry to assymetry, from rest to violence, or to feel the ineffable charm, warming one like friendship—to see men and women moving together in a sympathy of gesture, a prescience of progressive action that is at once complete coördination, ease; the poetry of life. And Cocteau's first impression of the ballet is true of a last look and every look; "Their thrilling dances then gave me a sharp pang of yearning to get a closer view of things immeasurable and unattainable, such as no poem of Heine's, no prose of Poe's, no fever dream has ever given me, and, since, I have invariably had the same sensation, at once sub-conscious and acute, which I attribute to the silent and nebulous precision of all they do."

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN

TWO SONNETS

I.

Behold you how the sinewed arms' lean grace,
  Reaving oppression of night's spreading pinions,
Trembles to limy bone in the embrace
  And thought rides off to hounds with death's minions.

Comes blear time he spurs on and never back,
  That day bone, thew, and blood shrink past their fiercing
And the moist eager skins dry tough and crack
  Like oak-branch crook-backed cracks at frosty piercing.

O flesh that holds so, keeps so moon-set, star-set,
  Gold-glitter and sweet song for every playing,
Fret not the mind's waste mad with grimy net
  Of thou shalt pay and heavy be the paying;

Fall we as one through these deep fields of night
Whose boundaries westward wing in silent flight.

TWO SONNETS

2.

Point downward, and the days see no regression
on that short journey singing as we go,
or silent and the ready fools of dream.

Seeking forgetfulness upon bright girls,
soliciting the darkness, where Death lives,
with pitiful lost hands; and never finding,
and caught perhaps within a moment's terror
that what is past belief may yet be true.

Always remembering the panting horror
of nights too young for such duplicity . . . .

But this, you say, is I and not my brother
in Christ, and you read right; but have you heard
the step, the shuffling step or seen the sharp
shadow of God about me like a bird?

GENE DE BULLET

APOLOGY FOR MY HEALTH

ONE afternoon when I was home during college vacation my mother asked me if I would give an old toy of mine, a miniature machine shop, to Russell Berg. Usually when she interrupted one of my books I merely continued reading until she walked away. On this occasion, however, I slammed my book shut and jumped up and kissed her and without saying a word climbed four flights to the storage room of our apartment house. I found the dusty cumbersome toy and carried it downstairs and changed my clothes. I was still in extraordinarily good spirits when I boarded an uptown trolley which took me towards the house in which three generations of the Berg family had lived and towards the scenes of my own boyhood. My parents and Russell's had been nextdoor neighbors for over a decade. He and I, being within two months of the same age, had grown up together as children; yet I had not seen him in eight years, or since he was twelve. At nine he had been withdrawn from grammar school and at twelve confined to his home. My mother was one of the few outsiders who had seen him since then, a distinction gained by taking him my old toys as presents — all, over the period of years, except the heavy machine shop. Visits to see him had been discouraged by his parents and, finally, even inquiries about his condition. They wished him to be forgotten and in time he was. — I recall speaking his name years afterwards. It was at the dinner table, after I had finished my first year's

work in psychology, and I was explaining to my parents the three classes of arrested development. Idiots, imbeciles, and morons, I said; then an example occurred to me. Because his mental growth had stopped at the age of nine, Russell Berg, I said, would be classed as an imbecile.

"That's what he is, I'm afraid, he's an imbecile," I repeated. The repetition was cruel; it was a triumph over an old enemy. But the enemy was not Russell; it was his grandmother.

When I recall him deliberately I see his eyes first. They were large and ultramarine. I remember them staring straight up, their lids blinking rapidly. His body lay across a circle that had been drawn in the dust with a stick, where he had fallen during a game of marbles in an epileptic fit. This was not his first fit, therefore not altogether a surprise to the boys silently waiting for foam to gather on his lips. As I was his closest friend and his champion I took charge of him; and when his grandmother arrived I helped her walk him home. She had been dressing and had run into the street with no skirt, only an opalescent petticoat that showed the hollows of her knees. I could not keep from looking at them, though with a fierce puerile scorn. Her legs were well known in our neighborhood, for she was an ancient flirt and liked to pull up her dress on summer evening porches and jokingly solicit the approval of the men. She also delighted in naughty stories. Her name was Mrs. Weber. The family was German, well-to-do, and Protestant.

When I recall Mrs. Weber deliberately I remember how she was envious of my reputation for scholarship and spread the report one September that I wanted to return to school. This is only a slight and rather amusing example of her unremitting dislike. It was ingenious of her, for no one believed

my defense, though it was true that I had never opened a schoolbook out of class. I was neither overstudious nor, as she implied, unathletic; every day I called to get Russell to practise for our football team of which I was the captain. As for him, his sole value to the team consisted in being the eleventh man, for we could not be sure of the most rudimentary or natural coöperation from him. It was not unusual for him to help the other side during an important play, or to stop abruptly and begin to fight — often with some member of his own team. Though very quarrelsome, he lost nearly all of his fights, and was hurt, besides, in almost every game he played — mostly by me, his friend and champion. Mrs. Berg was pitied by her friends and I was blamed by Mrs. Weber for his injuries long before any real ailment was suspected, before the rumor of his first fit.

I remember hearing this rumor one winter morning within a few hours after he had fallen down over a heat register while dressing. This was explained later by Mrs. Weber as merely a case of asphyxiation by fumes from the furnace, and at length it was forgotten. Several months must have passed before an incident which his unfortunate family was at difficulties to explain, for it took place in the presence of two witnesses, and I was one. With a boy named Bub, Russell and I had been playing near a shack that we three had built in some woods adjoining our neighborhood. When Russell fell with a strange moan Bub ran at once for help; but I did nothing, I simply stayed and watched Russell's convulsions. Soon Mrs. Berg, Mrs. Weber, and their cook Lizzie came running back with Bub. They showed so much distress and panic that I felt ashamed.

"What did you do to him!" Mrs. Weber demanded of me.

I could not think of any defense. Just before his fall we

had been engaged, he and I, in a duel with horseweed roots, and I had broken his and won. I seriously feared that my success at the duel — I had struck quite savagely near the wrist — might have brought on his fit. Also, I felt ashamed of having merely watched his convulsions. But my deepest shame was of the exulting thrill that had run through me when his infirmity, therefore his certain eclipse, had been assured. After helping to take him home I listened to Mrs. Weber's scolding and Mrs. Berg's thanks in silence. But at my own home I gave an account of the fit to my mother with animation. My mother and I had been strangely united by Mrs. Weber's dislike of me.

The woods in which Russell fell are now a real estate subdivision and not even the site of our shack remains; it is buried almost thirty feet underground, for the woods have been filled in. Yet to judge from a boyhood diary of mine, which I found in the attic a few days ago, I must at one time have spent every fair afternoon beneath the cellars of present-day homes. The origin of what I am writing, in fact, is these woods, for by the suggestion of my diary they reappeared to me, and I remembered throwing a mock orange at Russell during an Antietam refought there; I saw the green fruit crash through a tree, strike his white forehead, and knock him down. It was this memory that began this apology. I thought how often I had hurt him. That was my first idea.

Outdoors we played in these woods; indoors in his home, which was larger and better than mine. Russell owned more playthings than any other boy in town. Most of them had been given him by his grandmother — as an expression, I believed, less of her love for him than of her dislike for me. The most memorable of these gifts was a small billiard table which was installed in what became known as the billiard

room. I particularly recall one Saturday afternoon when I entered the billiard room in a state of sanctifying grace. I had just come from confession and intended to go to communion the next morning at eight o'clock mass. During the period between sacraments I was anxiously on guard against sin, especially unchaste thoughts; I was more than ordinarily impressed by the Church ruling that it is a sacrilege to receive the Host either in a state of mortal sin or after having eaten or drunk since midnight on communion day. On a Sunday morning when I was about to receive the Eucharist I brushed my teeth with my head bent forward, so that no water might run down my throat. If I were tempted I whispered a short prayer to the Virgin in my breath.

I found Russell and Bub in the billiard room, and we began a game. After a while Mrs. Weber and Mrs. Berg stopped at the door and watched us play. I made the winning shot.

While we were preparing to begin another game Mrs. Weber declared that Russell and Bub should team against me. "You're the oldest. You ought to let them do that," she said to me. I tried to protest that their scores in the last game, if combined, would have been much higher than mine and that, besides, I was only two months older than Russell; but whether by pretense or sincerely she seemed to be quite unable to understand what I meant.

"All right, let them," I said finally.

"Everybody's against you," Mrs. Berg said to me. "I'm going to be on your side."

During the game Russell unexpectedly switched up his grandmother's skirts with his cue and cried out: "Take a good look, gents! She's always showing them!" A little later he aimed his cue at her from behind, but it fell his turn

just then to play. He was coaxed to devote himself to the game. But soon afterwards he stopped a few inches from my face and said with a grin: "What are you so quiet about? He's just been confessing his sins to the priest. He's afraid to say anything, he's afraid it'll be dirty. He wants to gobble the wafer[1] tomorrow morning."

I played grimly and might have made the winning shot if Mrs. Weber had not spoken while I aimed. Although I had three chances afterwards I failed each time through anger and anxiety. Bub ended the game, and because it was rather late every one started to leave the room. I was unable, however, to repress a question with which I had been struggling. "Mrs. Weber," I asked, "why is it that you hate me? I don't mean the game, that's over. Just, why is it that you hate me so much?"

"Why, I don't hate you," she said. "What ever made you think that? I thought we were just good friends, you and I. I didn't know you had any ideas like that." She took my hand and held it against her breast.

I wished very much I had not spoken. The others also were embarrassed and continued going out of the room. Mrs. Weber and I were left alone.

"I didn't mean what I said.—I'll take it back," I offered.

"Why, I thought we were just good friends, you and I," she repeated reproachfully.

We stood there in silence a long time. She continued to hold my hand. Afterwards, during the hours of reflection which I gave to that minute, I felt pretty sure that my

[1] While rereading this page I was struck by the above expression which at first was set down, at the dictation of my memory, without fear of any one's doubt. I hope now that its reality will be believed. Though I have not the space to introduce those sides of his character here, Russell possessed genuine insight at times as well as a knack of violent phrase.

mother's passing suspicion — that Mrs. Weber was a renegade Catholic—had been confirmed; for she seemed to have understood as no one born Protestant would have understood that if I were to be led to have unchaste thoughts I should be ineligible for communion the next day. That night in bed I grew convinced of my sin. The next morning, rather than admit my uncertainty to my mother or risk a sacrilege, I drank a glass of water as though by mistake, and did not take the Host.

But I must go back to Russell's eyes, for I have just recalled them again with a pang, as though I have been neglecting something important. I remember holding his temples between my hands and peering into his eyes. The pupil of the left was notched at the top. This must have been some time after a day when he and I called for Bub to get up a game of scrub baseball. While waiting for Bub to appear, as he was keeping our only ball at that time, Russell picked up a stone which we began to pass back and forth in Bub's yard, for we were wearing our baseball gloves. Without warning Russell threw the stone with all his speed at my head. Though we were barely fifteen feet apart I caught it. An instant before throwing it back I feinted with my glove. Then I returned it gently, but he was upset both by the trick and his fear of missing. The stone sailed slowly through his hands into his left eye. There was one drop of crimson on his ultramarine iris. I bent over him: he held his eye open for me to see.

I ran to his home which was two doors away. Mrs. Berg and Mrs. Weber were hostesses that afternoon to a bridge game. I went straight to Mrs. Berg's table.

"Russell's blind!" I cried.

By that time his continual misfortunes were well known in

our neighborhood. Several members of the bridge club ran back with me, wriggling through a hedge rather than take a longer way. Mrs. Weber tried to leap this hedge and fell down. I helped her up.

"What did you do to him!" she whispered, out of breath. She wrenched her elbow out of my grasp after regaining her feet.

When she had seen his eye she turned at once to me. "What made you throw at him?"

"He catches butterfingered. That's how it happened," I explained.

"What do you mean by that?"

"He holds his hands this way instead of this."

"It doesn't matter how he holds his handses. What made you throw at him? What were you trying to do, were you trying to put his eyes out?"

"It's only one eye," I mumbled.

"What's that?"

I did not repeat what I had said.

"It's only one eye? Did you hear that!" she said to the other women.

"Come on, Mother, stop quarrelling," Mrs. Berg said.

"I'm not quarrelling, I just want to find out why any one would want to put poor Russell's eyes out."

"I'll help you, Mrs. Berg," I offered; but there seemed to be nothing for me to do.

Russell was taken in an automobile to a private eye hospital and operated on within an hour. It was said later that this dispatch saved his eye; the only injury was the notching of the pupil. It was an expensive operation for which my father could not have offered to pay even a share. I cried two hours that afternoon. I did not avail myself of the defense that he

had tried first to hit me with the stone, I simply blamed myself. That day when I assumed such an undue portion of guilt and apology now seems to me to have left an indelible stamp on my character. And it may explain why in recalling Russell I saw his eyes first.

Of course, I did not think of these things on the street car while taking my old toy to Russell. Even after ringing the Berg's doorbell and being admitted by Lizzie I had not experienced one of the memories that are written down here. Those came later. I put the toy on a hall table and waited in the living room. Mrs. Berg came downstairs carrying a neuralgic arm in a black silk sling. In spite of her family's repeated illnesses and misfortunes, her daughter's death, her mother's tyranny, the years she had devoted to Russell, her own bad health, and the remorse she was supposed to have felt since Russell's condition had been traced by a specialist to the large quantities of champagne which had been given her during her pregnancy — in spite of all this she looked fresh and unweary. She examined the parts of the machine shop — its triphammers, engine, lathe, grindstone, belts, etc. — with real enthusiasm and with more intelligence in such matters than mine.

"He could turn matchsticks on that little lathe," she said.

Mrs. Weber came downstairs.

"Why how do you do!" she greeted me.

She also examined and admired my gift, and then passed into the living room.

"I guess I'll have to be going," I said.

"Why, won't you sit down a few minutes?" Mrs. Berg asked.

"Sit down," said Mrs. Weber.

"We all saw your picture in the paper when you won that scholarship," Mrs. Berg said. "What was it for, psychology?"

"Something like that," I said, sitting down.

"We all thought it was fine."

"Did you hear about Bub?" Mrs. Weber asked. "He's going to be on the next Olympics."

"You mean the Olympic team," I said.

"Anyway he's going to go to Europe. He gets all his expenses paid. He's had his picture in all the papers, even in New York."

"Yes, I've seen him run. He's very good," I said.

"Did you hear that the McLellan boy entered the priesthood?" Mrs. Berg asked. "He's going to be a Jesuit. It will take him sixteen years before he gets out."

"I'm afraid I stopped being religious a long time ago," I said quickly.

"Why, don't you still go to what do they call it? mass any more?" Mrs. Weber demanded. "I always thought you were going to be a priest yourself."

"Oh no, Mrs. Weber, you're altogether wrong about that."

"I always thought you were."

"Oh no."

There was a long silence.

Mrs. Berg asked me if I'd like to go upstairs and see Russell.

"Why, yes. I'd like to very much. If it's all right. You understand what I mean by if it's all right. Just that maybe he's asleep, or you have to straighten up, or something like that. . . . I'd like to see him very much," I said positively, rising.

Nothing more was said, we walked out of the room. The machine shop was left on the hall table. Mrs. Weber de-

sired me to precede her on the stairs, and I sprang forward at once. Before leaving home I had put on a new plaid suit that widened me, as well as my best shoes, a clean shirt, and my favorite tie. I had been eager to display myself to Mrs. Weber. This had been the reason for my good spirits; this was why I had shut my book so readily at the suggestion of the gift, and why I had jumped up and kissed my mother.

Upstairs Mrs. Berg excused herself and went into Russell's room. Mrs. Weber and I were left alone.

I grinned. "Well, here we are — alone again."

"Just wait till you see him," she said. "It's terrible the way he is now. Sometimes I want to take Sarah in one hand and him in the other and walk into the river. You don't know how it is to have a boy like that. Why, he's just an idiot, that's what he is. He really is."

Mrs. Berg opened the door.

At first the room looked nearly as dark as it had been on the winter evenings when Russell and I played with our toy trains together. It did not seem surprising that the tracks should still be there. As my eyes grew used to the shaded light I could tell my own cars from his with no difficulty. In the same way I recognized a turntable, a bridge, a caboose, and certain mailcars as relative innovations. The tracks were still laid out according to a scheme of my own engineering. My memory made me ashamed; it would have been more distinguished, I thought, not to have recalled with so little effort the names of the three cities which the network of tracks connected, nor to have recognized the man living in the signal tower by name.

Russell remained sitting by the tracks.

"Aren't you going to say hello?" Mrs. Berg reproved him.

"Hi, Punk," he said with a grin.

I had forgotten I had ever been called by that name.

"Hi, Russ," I said.

His hand was wet and loathsome. I left mine in his a second longer than usual, so as not to appear disgusted to Mrs. Berg.

What saddened me most was not her efforts to make the reunion seem commonplace, nor Mrs. Weber's compressed silence until Russell picked his nose — when she scolded him angrily — nor Russell's preoccupation with a switch; it was his long trousers and a rumblossom pimple on his nose. These made me think of his lonely adolescence. Up to this point my thoughts and feelings have seemed to me to be clear, but although I have reflected several days—and try not to feign incomprehension where I understand the truth — I am unable to say why I carried away, when I left Russell, a burden of guilt. This guilt, nonetheless — not sadness, not pity — I still feel: I cannot bear today to think of being well while he is sick. I have been compelled to write this apology for my health.

GERALD SYKES

INVITATION

Come in, come into Christian Schroeder's house.
Tip up those burly eyebrows: we'll carouse.
While the warm West pulls on the boot of Night
sitting on stones with tilted hats we'll fight
with naked hands of mind,
Love's daggers crossed.
Your dangerous eyes show me what I have lost.

The Lord but late
shepherding on this rock came in His mantle, bidding me
unlock
for Him I made a fire in my heart
and burned, burned, burned 'ere let that Light depart.

Come in. . . .
wind follows through the gaping door.
Twigs and wet leaves wipe over Christian's floor.
Draughts swelling make the unwelcome puddles bold
my home is here
can you endure the cold ?

Villainous darling
on your heaviness
what rat-mouth King that seal did first impress ?
The world has murdered what you might have been

yet always starlit queen, you are a queen.
Daughter of darkness
In your falling hair the sons of morning hide their wild
despair.

You lean with studied ease on a grey pier
as if it were not pillar of all here.
Ungracious speechless visitor
like the swallow open-mouthed:
flies go in,
but no tunes follow.

O filthy laughter !
Better lie in grave than laugh.
Remember, "what I had I gave."
Is the stream falling, falling, falling ever
dearer
than the green crag it chills ?
Lord !
never.

ERIC SCHROEDER

HENRY ADAMS

A CRITICISM IN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

PART II

CHAPTER V

"*The Five of Hearts*" (1880-1884)

THE Five of Hearts" lived in Washington, and they were Clarence King, Hay and his wife, and the Adamses. In 1884 Adams joined Hay in employing H. H. Richardson to build them adjoining houses on La Fayette Square. "Nowhere in the United States was there then, or has there since been, such a *salon* as theirs (the Adamses'). Sooner or later, everybody who possessed real quality crossed the threshold of 1603 H Street. Host and hostess were fastidious, and only the select came to them. Mr. Adams sought nobody out; he regarded himself as solitary, and knew very well that official Washington cared nothing for him, and little enough for the intellectual sphere in which he lived. . . . To his intimates — and these included women of wit and charm and distinction — the hours spent in his study or at his table were the best that Washington could give."[12] Out of this society came the novels, the anonymous *Democracy* in 1880, and *Esther*, in 1884, which was published under the pseudonym of Frances Snow Compton.

In his novels Adams began with a theme. Like many Eng-

[12] Thayer, *Life and Letters of John Hay*. Vol. II, p. 53.

lish writers — Pope, Blake, Wordsworth, Shaw — Adams risked the inclusion of contemporary material which was likely to become musty with time. *Democracy*, like his articles, the "Session" and "Civil Service Reform," exposed the meager substance of the democratic ideal; *Esther* revealed the ineffectualness of modern religion.

The theme of *Democracy* was the first chapter: "For reasons which many persons thought ridiculous, Mrs. Lightfoot Lee decided to pass the winter in Washington. . . . She wanted to see with her own eyes the action of primary forces; to touch with her own hand the massive machinery of society; to measure with her own mind the capacity of the motive power. She was bent upon getting to the heart of the great American mystery of democracy and government."[13]

Esther, as well, immediately considered its problem: "The new Church of St. John's, on Fifth Avenue, was thronged the morning of the last Sunday of October, in the year 1880. Sitting in the gallery, beneath the unfinished frescoes, and looking down the nave, one caught an effect of autumn gardens, a suggestion of chrysanthemums and geraniums, or of October woods, dashed with scarlet oaks and yellow maples. As a display of austerity the show was a failure, but if cheerful content and innocent adornment please the Author of the lilies and roses, there was reason to hope that this first service at St. John's found favor in His sight, even though it showed no victory over the world or the flesh in this part of the United States. The sun came through the figure of St. John in his crimson and green garments of glass, and scattered more color where colors already rivaled the flowers of a prize show; while huge prophets and evangelists in flowing robes looked down from the red walls on a display

[13] *Democracy*, pp. 1 and 10.

of human vanities that would have called out a vehement Lamentation of Jeremiah or Song of Solomon had these poets been present in flesh as they were in figure.

"Solomon was a brilliant but not an accurate observer; he looked at the world from the narrow stand-point of his own temple. Here in New York he could not have truthfully said that all was vanity, for even a more ill-natured satirist than he must have confessed that there was in this new temple today a perceptible interest in religion. One might almost have said that religion seemed to be a matter of concern. The audience wore a look of interest, and even after their first gaze of admiration and whispered criticism at the splendors of their new church, when at length the clergyman entered to begin the service, a ripple of excitement swept across the field of bonnets until there was almost a murmur as of rustling cornfields within the many colored walls of St. John's" . . . The Clergyman, Mr. Hazard, "took possession of his flock with a general advertisement that he owned every sheep in it, white or black, and to show that there could be no doubt on the matter he added a general claim to the right of property in all mankind and the universe. . . . After sweeping all human thought and will into his strongbox, he shut down the lid with a sharp click, and bade his audience kneel. . . . 'And how did it suit you, Esther?'

" 'I am charmed,' replied his daughter, 'only it certainly does come just a little near being an opera-house. Mr. Hazard looks horribly like Meyerbeer's Prophet.' "[14]

The plots follow out the settings. In *Democracy*, Mrs. Lee comes near being a sacrifice to the corruption of representative government in the form of Senator Ratcliffe; in *Esther*, Miss Dudley is almost an Iphigenia offered to the

[14] *Esther*, pp. 1-13.

religious knife of Reverend Hazard. The action centers about the women.

"Adams owed more to the American woman than to all the American men he ever heard of." . . . Yet sometimes, at dinner, he "might wait till talk flagged, and then, as mildly as possible, ask one's liveliest neighbor whether she could explain why the American woman was a failure. . . . The cleverer the woman, the less she denied the failure. She was bitter at heart about it. She had failed even to hold the family together, and her children ran away like chickens with their first feathers; the family was extinct like chivalry. The American woman at her best — like most other women — exerted great charm on the man, but not the charm of a primitive type. She appeared as the result of a long series of discords, and her chief interest lay in what she had discarded."[15]

"In any previous age, sex was strength. Neither art nor beauty was needed. Every one, even among Puritans, knew that neither Diana of the Ephesians nor any of the oriental goddesses was worshipped for her beauty. She was goddess because of her force; she was the animated dynamo; she was reproduction — the greatest and most mysterious of all energies; all she needed was to be fecund."[16]

Mrs. Lightfoot Lee and Esther Dudley were American women and failures. To Adams they were almost as great failures as himself. The worth while women in America Adams suggested in the young, buoyant types of Sybil Ross in *Democracy* and Catherine Brooke in *Esther*. They had, at least, something of Laura, St. Cecilia, something of the luxuriousness of "L'Aube, Mois du Juin." Madeline Lee, on the other hand, "cared little where her pursuit might

[15] *The Education*, pp. 442-445.

[16] *The Education*, p. 384.

lead her, for she put no extravagant value upon life, having already, as she said, exhausted at least two lives, and being fairly hardened to insensibility in the process. 'To lose a husband and a baby,' said she, 'and keep one's courage and reason, one must become very hard and very soft. I am now pure steel. You may beat my heart with a trip-hammer and it will beat the trip-hammer back again.' "[17]

And Esther for an American Virgin is quite hopeless. While she combs her hair, she looks out through a window upon Niagara: Force and an understanding of immortality strike her with great suddenness — "immortality is a sort of great reservoir of truth, and what is true in us just pours into it like raindrops."[18] Adams himself could not have expressed it any better in the scientific deviousness of his *Education*. His women characters are brilliant, profound, but they all escape marriage.

The novels were books of disillusion. Disillusion often gives free reign to most sensitive expression:

"Esther was now twenty-five years old, and for fifteen years had been absolute mistress of her father's house."[19]

"So she went to her bed, in the cold, gray dawn of a winter's day, with the tears still running down her face. When she awoke again the day was already waning, a dripping wasting thaw, where smoking and soot-defiled snow added sadness to the sad sky."[20]

After her father's death, Esther, to forget, goes to the children's hospital; the children request stories: "She took her old seat and looked through the yellow eyes of the firedogs for inspiration."[21]

[17] *Democracy*, p. 11.
[18] *Esther*, p. 273.
[19] *Esther*, p. 17.
[20] *Esther*, Chap. VI.
[21] *Esther*, p. 160.

"She felt quite sure, by a sudden flash of feminine inspiration, that the curious look of patient endurance on his face was the work of a single night when he had held his brother in his arms, and knew that the blood was draining drop by drop from his side, in the dense, tangled woods, beyond the reach of help, hour after hour, till the voice failed and the limbs grew stiff and cold. When he had finished his story, she was afraid to speak."[22]

"In February the weather became warmer and summer-like. In Virginia there comes often at this season a deceptive gleam of summer, slipping in between heavy storm-clouds of sleet and snow; days and sometimes weeks when the earliest plants begin to show their hardy flowers, and when the bare branches of the forest trees alone protest against the conduct of the seasons."[23]

On the whole, however, the novels meant to be charmingly gay. Adams was no Dostoyevsky, seeking character under guise on guise of psychological attitude. Neither did he, like Henry James, make an aesthetic of manners. His people were by all means the choicest, but he did not trouble to explain why each one of them spoke in his own way. Adams just had them speak. Thus, Count Popoff: " 'Mees Ross,' said Count Popoff, leading in a handsome young foreigner, 'I have your permission to present to you my friend, Count Orsini, Secretary of the Italian Legation. Are you at home this afternoon? Count Orsini sings also.' "

Adams suggested character in a name: Mr. Hartbeest Schneidekoupon, Senator Nathan Gore from Massachusetts, Senator Silas P. Ratcliffe from Illinois, Miss Virginia Dare, Lord Skye, George Hazard. *Democracy*, in its description

[22] *Democracy*, p. 251.

[23] *Democracy*, p. 113.

of the fête given by the society of Washington to the Grand-Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Baden-Hombourg, rivals the lightning grace of a Max Beerbohm.

The "Five of Hearts" must have gloried in Adams' wit — especially in the success he attained in Sybil's letter to Carrington: "I read Mr. Browning's 'Last Ride Together,' as you told me; I think it's beautiful and perfectly easy, all but a little. I never could understand a word of him before — so I never tried. Who do you think is engaged? Victoria Dare, to a coronet and peatbog, with Lord Dunbeg attached. Victoria says she is happier than she ever was before in any of her other engagements, and she is sure this is the real one. She says she has thirty thousand a year derived from the poor of America, which may just as well go to relieve the poor of Ireland. You know her father was a claim agent, or some such thing, and is said to have made his money by cheating his clients out of their claims. She is perfectly wild to be a countess, and means to make Castle Dunbeg lovely by-and-by and entertain us all there. Madeleine says she is just the kind to be a great success in London. Madeleine is very well, and sends her regards. I believe she is going to add a postscript. I have promised to let her read this, but I don't think a chaperoned letter is much fun to write or receive. Hoping to hear from you soon,

Sincerely yours,
Sybil Ross."[24]

Henry Adams was happy then. The nieces remember him and their aunt and the summer house in the Beverly woods. "Often in the afternoons, the nieces would watch — almost enviously — the two figures on horseback vanishing into the

[24] *Democracy*, pp. 373-374.

flickering sunlight of the woods. An impression of oneness of life and mind, of perfect companionship, left an ideal never to be effaced."[25]

Chapter VI

The Aged Man of Learning and a Judgment (1880-1891)

MABEL LA FARGE pursues the story of the happiest days: "At that time he was writing his *History*; hours of concentration were passed in his den and sheets on sheets of beautifully written pages lay beside him. One could not forget that handwriting. Each letter seemed to be carved rather than written, and the effect of the whole page was that of an interlacing Byzantine design, but perfectly clear to read. The nieces remember him as he sat at his desk, in cool white summer clothes — his fine head and thoughtful forehead dominated a small frame; his movements were deliberate — only the scratch of his pen would break the silence of the room, until the delicious moment came when he would stop, and turn to them with an irresistibly droll remark."

Adams, also, reconsidered the *History* in his *Education*: "Adams had given ten or a dozen years to Jefferson and Madison, with expenses which, in any mercantile business, could hardly have been reckoned at less than a hundred thousand dollars, on a salary of five thousand a year; and when he asked what return he got from this expenditure, rather more extravagant in proportion to his means than a racing-stable, he could see none whatever."[26]

The History of the United States during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison, in nine volumes of over

[25] *Letters to a Niece*, p. 8.

[26] P. 327.

four thousand pages, easily placed Henry Adams among such American historians of rank as Prescott and Parkman. For impartial judgment, for literary power that can turn documentary research to useful reflection and absorbing story, authorities, like Worthington Chauncey Ford, Carl Becker, Henry Osborn Taylor, think it unrivaled. John Hay informally averred that the volumes on the first administration of Madison (V and VI) "took the cake. The style is perfect, if perfect is a proper word applied to anything so vivid, so flexible and so powerful. I never expected to read anything which would give me so much pleasure." Hay never expected Adams to get the Loubat Prize, as well, and wondered "that Columbia College could have done so evidently sensible a thing."

The general reader will perhaps give "the cake" to the introduction — (Volume I — Chapters 1-6) which consists of the chapters on Physical and Economical Conditions, Popular Characteristics, Intellect of New England, Intellect of the Middle States, Intellect of the Southern States, and American Ideals. The preliminary is at once broadly descriptive and specific, and thruout, once a picture is presented it stays in mind: "Nature was rather man's master than his servant, and the five million Americans struggling with the untamed continent seemed hardly more competent to their task than the beavers and buffalo which had for countless generations made bridges and roads of their own."[27] . . . "A traveller on the levee at Natchez, in 1808, overheard a quarrel in a flatboat near by: 'I am a man; I am a horse; I am a team,' cried one voice; 'I can whip any man in all Kentucky, by God!' 'I am an alligator,' cried the other, 'half man, half horse; can whip

[27] Vol. I, p. 5.

any man on the Mississippi, by God!' 'I am a man,' shouted the first; 'I have the best horse, best dog, best gun, and handsomest wife in all Kentucky, by God!' 'I am a Mississippi snapping-turtle,' joined the second, 'I have bear's claws, alligator's teeth, and the devil's tail; can whip *any* man, by God!' "[28] . . .

"Moore was but an echo of fashionable England in his day. He seldom affected moral sublimity; and had he in his wanderings met a race of embodied angels, he would have sung of them or to them in the slightly erotic notes which were so well received in the society he loved to frequent and flatter."[29]

"Most picturesque of all figures in modern history, Napoleon Bonaparte, like Milton's Satan on his throne of state, although surrounded by a group of figures little less striking than himself, sat unapproachable on his bad eminence; or, when he moved, the dusky air felt an unusual weight. His conduct was often mysterious, and sometimes so arbitrary as to seem insane; but later years have thrown on it a lurid illumination."[30]

Passage after passage must be quoted to give an adequate idea of the sentence rhythm, which always meets the subject with a master's grace. Poetry, in the simple direct phrasing, is concentrate: "The poor came, and from them were seldom heard complaints of deception or delusion"[31] . . . "A week afterward Jefferson quitted Washington forever. On horseback, over roads impassable to wheels, through snow and storm, he hurried back to Monticello to recover in the quiet of home the peace of mind he had lost in disappointments of

[28] Vol. I, p. 54.
[29] Vol. I, p. 167.
[30] Vol. I, p. 334.
[31] Vol. I, p. 194.

statesmanship. He arrived at Monticello March 15 and never passed beyond the bounds of a few adjacent counties."[32]

Humor is abundant, especially in portraiture. Jefferson, who was sensitive, affectionate, heroic, in his own eyes, and more refined than many women in the delicacy of his private relations, again, sits on one hip. John Marshall's calm is Rhadamanthine. Napoleon, in his bath, overrules his brothers on the Louisiana treaty. When the British fleet steamed up the Potomac, "the House of Representatives ordered a fast and went into secret session to consider modes of defence." As Adams said of Irving's *History of New York*: it is hard to burlesque without vulgarizing, and to satirize without malignity. Adams succeeded in doing both.

The direction of the entire work is not only American; it is international. It is not merely a progression of great narratives that embraces the Napoleonic Wars, the growth of America from the backwoods to the beginning of industrialism, but it is specific in many branches of knowledge — law, finance, sociology, American literature in the early eighteen hundreds. Yet, after all this mass of detail, the work ends on a number of questions: "The traits of American character were fixed; the rate of physical and economic growth was established; and history, certain that at a given distance of time the Union would contain so many millions of people, with wealth valued at so many millions of dollars, became thenceforward chiefly concerned to know what kind of people these millions were to be. They were intelligent, but what paths would their intelligence select? They were quick, but what solution of insoluble problems would quickness hurry? They were scientific, and what control would their science exercise

[32] Vol. IV, p. 472.

over their destiny? They were mild, but what corruptions would their relaxations bring? They were peaceful, but by what machinery were their corruptions to be purged? What interests were to vivify a society so vast and uniform? What ideals were to ennoble it? What object besides physical content must a democratic continent aspire to attain?"[33]

Adams wrote the *History* during the happy years, and perhaps never thought it was necessary to answer these questions. The *History* is a presentation of facts. No philosophy controls these facts; no science that indicates even a "decline and fall." The last was perhaps not in the nature of Adams' subject.

A French sceptic has told the story of the king who desired to know the history of mankind. Scholars brought him thousands of volumes. The king, overwhelmed, asked for a compendium. Years passed, and perhaps the scholars brought him nine, and finally one, when he was ready to turn his face to the wall and resign his breath. "I die," said the king, "without knowing the history of mankind." "Not so, sire," answered the aged man of learning, who had finally arrived: "I can compress it for you into three words. They were born, suffered and died."

"Art," says Delacroix, "is exaggeration in the right place." In his *History*, Adams did not exaggerate. But by the time he came to publish it, the happy years were gone. The *History* seemed a worthless labor.

Always, to Adams, education, brought face to face with friendship, as when he met Clarence King, was no longer possible. And before Nature — "the human mind felt itself stripped naked, vibrating in a void of shapeless energies, with resistless mass, colliding, crushing, wasting, and destroying

[33] Vol. IX, p. 369.

what these same energies had created and labored from eternity to perfect." . . . "Flung suddenly in his face, with the harsh brutality of chance, the terror of the blow stayed by him thenceforth for life, until repetition made it more than the will could struggle with; more than he could call on himself to bear."[34]

Chapter VII

Dec. 6, 1885

WHEN John Hay heard that his friend's wife had died, he wrote to him: "You and your wife were more to me than any other two. I came to Washington because you were there. And now this goodly fellowship is broken up forever. I cannot force on a man like you the commonplaces of condolence . . . You have a great sorrow, but no man should bear sorrow better than you."[35]

Adams lived it all through, but ever so silently. He might imply that his life had been a broken arch, but he felt repose and self-restraint as nothing else. Leaving art to make the best of death in a monument at Rock Creek, Adams went on submissive. To the heart, at least, infinite peace meant something.

Adams' world lay all before him. His best works were yet to be written. Still, to the sensitive with whom great contacts were few, and these a very quiet matter, the greatest was never to be recorded.

[34] *The Education*, chapter XIX.
[35] *Life and Letters of John Hay*. Vol. II, p. 59.

Louis Zukofsky

To Be Continued

FAMILIAR HEROINE

Of our knowing a heroine
Given to seeing all houses as yellow
All shade as cold ocean possessing.
She walks stampingly strange lanes where thistles fall often,
And she stands a while on dark steps by long tracks.
She likes insects to whom she gives names, a name for each one she knows.
She sees cubes in soft earth, fans in air, steps in the high air beyond houses.
She prays noisily certain powers she is familiar with, fond of colorful dressing, of sweeping clothes and snug hair.
She loves coils, corrugations, springs, wires together, woven each into each.
She thinks a certain moon ought to be for Greece, another for Guiana, the first Guiana.
She sees novels as straight from a nervous devil who knows what two syllables can do going with three.
She sees cars as a steel-like, speedy vegetation, made to transport air and vivify reposeful atmosphere.
What she thinks of gales is horrible.
Hurricanes she's very fond of and understands them more each day.
White she sees as the color of things underground, as the color of the bottoms of frigates, liners, various ships; also as the means of talking used by certain bold petals.

Her sentiments are highly flexible; yesterday they changed about the number 80.

Wood she sees as Juno's favorite, Mexico's darling.

Mahogany is to her worthy of praise for the sounds it can make; also for the fine way it goes with air.

Night she sees as the cover of meadows, the stiller of trees, the adorner of spheres, and the general painting of weighty, wide substances, given to having shouting in them.

Quiet she looks upon as something charming, something made by mischievous, but correct gods to be of much assistance to certain dreams.

This heroine is a dweller among spaces, between parallels, and the emptinesses neighboring jagged high marble growings out of the ground.

Such is a heroine of our knowing.

Us she sees as knowing her well and friendly.

ELI SIEGEL

THE DEFINITION OF HUMANISM

"Are you then an aesthete?"

"Ah there's one of the formulas! That's walking in one's hat! I've *no* profession. . . . These things are a part of the complicated ingenious machinery. . . . Merely to be is such a *métier*. . . . Why should one call one's self anything? One only deprives other people of their dearest occupation. Let me add that you don't *begin* to have an insight into the art of life till it ceases to be of the smallest consequence to you what you may be called."

The conversation with Gabriel Nash, of which the above question and answer form a part, has come back to me more than once out of Henry James's *Tragic Muse* as I have followed the discussion of humanism, during the last eighteen months or more, in periodicals and books. Several essays which have appeared in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, written by Mr. Philip S. Richards and by Mr. F. McEachran, have been excellent; one can have only praise for them, and the feeling that Mr. McEachran's "Humanism and Tragedy," in particular, lends worth to the discussion which called it forth. Mr. Bandler's essay on "The Individualism of Irving Babbitt," published in this periodical last autumn, is likewise valuable for critical characterization of a high order. Nevertheless, I have been reminded of Nash's light words because they adumbrate a serious problem. Doubtless we should all decry formulas;— notoriously the whole race longs for

them, will have them. "Man lives not by bread alone, but chiefly by catchwords," said the irascible wise man of Chelsea. But the humanist, if any one, the man who has a genuine "insight into the art of life," must be peculiarly distrustful of catchwords — of formulas cheap, alas, from their very nature. The humanist, if any one in our time, will refuse to advertise himself, and will care not by what name the multitude may designate him.

Yet an aroused public interest brings general discussion; argument is born thereof; questions are insistently asked; "direct" (absolute) answers are demanded — Yes or No. Controversy *creates* formulas — cannot live without them, and thrives to no other end. The inevitable spokesman appears, anxious to oblige. A "movement" is in being. The worst of these "movements," thought W. P. Ker, is that they put "ideas into people's heads who would not otherwise have been troublesome." And Ker quoted a verse from Tennyson's *Holy Grail* to enforce his remark:

"Lo, one hath seen, and all the blind will see!"

The blind are duly participating in the present discussion of humanism, obscuring the real issue, and inclining one simply to turn away from the paper warfare. But that too is impossible; silence itself is misunderstood; and the fate of Gabriel Nash is only one of many warnings that this is not the worst penalty attending silence. Few episodes in fiction are really so amusing and, at the same time, so profoundly conceived as that wherein poor excellent Nash fades away from earthly haunts; — quietly fades away just because he not only refuses the fields of action open to men, but even refuses to submit his evaluations to the ordeal of exact expression and vulgar confrontation. The price of his singular detachment is his gradual, and finally complete, loss of identity. His is a

very special case, to be sure — but special only in its "accidents."

For the problem Nash typifies is as old as man and is central in his existence. However it may be "above," here and now one must reap one's good precariously in the choice of lesser evils. To withdraw from the world is what Gabriel found it, what Dr. Johnson so often and forcibly pictured it to be; — it is to render disaster certain. One's good is lost by aiming at it too closely, without regard to earthly limitations. To exist as a man is to exist among men; to believe is to act positively, to bear witness positively, not ostentatiously, humbly it may be, but without sacrificing more to vulgar demands than the social basis of life necessitates. Circumstances at length in this year 1930, we are told, give humanism a popular appeal. "We must make the most of this opportunity." By all means. "We must have a programme, catchwords, be radically modern, meet the public on its own ground, insinuate a kinship with science, generously absorb religion, make genial concessions." By no means. As well say outright, "Cease to be a humanist in order to sell humanism." Speech is, truly enough, a manner as well as a means of accommodation, and is misused if it does not serve the cause of common understanding. But if the honest effort to see clearly and to speak plainly is not enough — so much the worse for popular success. How much evidence, after all, opposes Thoreau's grim conclusion: "God does not sympathize with the popular movements"?

I

The point, like others, may be laboured too much. But I cannot concede, with Professor Foerster, that Mr. T. S. Eliot wrote an "earnest essay" on "The Humanism of Irving Bab-

bitt," nor that he wrote earnestly his "Second Thoughts about Humanism."[1] Professor Foerster's gratitude for these brightly written meditations leaves me, like the poet, mourning. Mr. Eliot professes to be a friendly critic, reluctantly impelled to expose the weaknesses of Professor Babbitt's humanism just because he values "pure" humanism and wishes to save it from discredit. Professor Foerster takes Mr. Eliot at his word and finds his questions "helpful because they are really searching." If this be forbearance, it is as remarkable in its way as Mr. Eliot's pretensions. If it be policy on each side, it may be "beautiful," but it is not the "best policy" as classically defined.

For it is, I conceive, easily demonstrable that Mr. Eliot is no critic at all of the humanism of Messrs. Babbitt and P. E. More. Were he aware of the real character of his essays, he might justly and accurately explain his performance, in a moment of candour, by altering slightly a famous letter of Lord Chesterfield: "As a convenient means of developing my own notions," he would say, "I was to treat of American humanism, which is expounded at length in books, most of which I have never mastered. However, it was absolutely necessary to make my readers think that I knew something of the matter, and also to make them believe that they knew something of it themselves, which they do not. For my own part, I could just as soon have talked Celtic or Sclavonian to them as the new American humanism, and they would scarcely have noticed the difference; so I resolved to do better than speak to the purpose, and to please instead of informing them.

[1] I refer to "Humanism and Religion," an article by Professor Norman Foerster published in *The Forum*, September, 1929, and in *The Criterion*, October, 1929. Mr. Eliot's first essay mentioned above is to be found in his book *For Lancelot Andrewes*, 1928; and his second in *The New Adelphi*, June, 1929, and in *The Hound & Horn*, July, 1929.

I gave them, therefore, only an historical view of humanism from Socrates to Erasmus, amusing them now and then with little ingenuities of transposition and allusion; but I was particularly attentive to the choice of my words, to the form of my sentences, to the establishment of an easy relation with my readers. This succeeded, and ever will succeed: they thought I informed, because I pleased them; and many of them said that I had made the whole very clear to them, when, God knows, I had not even attempted it."

I do not, of course, mean to imply that Mr. Eliot deliberately clouded the issue; I mean only to say that, with some allowance for Chesterfield's irony, this adaptation fairly indicates his actual achievement. He wrote honestly, I am sure, but ignorantly, hastily, flippantly, as a master of the dubious art of plausible reviewing. His mastery of this art has ever been a dangerous accomplishment; yet through nearly all of his criticism there shines a light — the light of a very pure, though not exactly profound, intelligence — and the first at least of his essays on humanism is no complete exception to what many have come to think of, happily and gratefully, as the rule with Mr. Eliot. It contains acute observations. But that acumen which has often led him swiftly and surely to the centre of his subjects, and has made him deservedly one of the most respected and distinguished critics of our day, has in this instance served him ill. He has sharply outlined certain peripheral truths, themselves concerning not humanism so much as Professor Babbitt, under the impression that he was thus illuminating the heart of his subject. And superficiality proved a fatal temptation, perhaps, just because he was moved by a serious personal interest.

As everyone now knows, Mr. Eliot has been convinced of the continuing validity of historic Christianity, and has be-

come an Anglo-Catholic. There remain troublesome, unanswered questions as to what this may mean; but evidently, in the essays now in question, it at least means that he rests himself, for his understanding of life, upon external absolute authority. Those who guard and transmit Christian revelation and dogma, however, he distrusts, holding that their office makes them "narrow, bigoted, and fanatical." These evil manifestations of human nature, nevertheless, "the world cannot get on without," though it also cannot get on without their counter-agent, "general culture," which "makes for breadth, tolerance, equilibrium, and sanity." "Pure" humanism, he asserts, *is* simply "general culture"; — hence his concern for it. But "pure" humanism exerts its moderating, civilizing power only in dependence on religion; when opposed to "the religious faith of the place and time" humanism is "purely destructive."

How this would work out in detail is a mystery, and no surprise should be felt at Mr. Eliot's warning that "a considerable time" must elapse before his promised solution will be ready. Meanwhile it is disquieting that he should write as if his troubles were already over. It is at least a pity that one who appears not to take serious questions seriously, should himself be taken seriously by others. The "young intellectuals" who are said to follow his lead will perhaps discover in time that Mr. Eliot has exaggerated, not to say distorted, the significance of his "conversion."

However that may be, from a foundation not yet built, if I may so put it, Mr. Eliot has addressed words of admonishment to American humanists because, valuing "pure" humanism for the reason above mentioned, he has discovered that Professor Babbitt's kind is "very different" from that of the exponents of "general culture." In this difference he dis-

cerns weakness productive of disaster — nothing less than "the ultimate discredit of all humanism." He does so because certain forcible remarks of Professor Babbitt have led him to believe that American humanism offers itself as an alternative to religion — and "for us, religion is of course Christianity." Professor Foerster, in the brief exposition of humanism included in his *American Criticism*,[2] has confirmed Mr. Eliot in his belief.

It is clear, then, that Mr. Eliot wrote as a friend of "pure" humanism, but as an enemy of American humanism in which he scented a challenge to his religion. Tactically it was an advantage to picture the rival as weak, to poke fun at Professor Babbitt, to make Professor Foerster look silly — and all this was done; while in fact Mr. Eliot admitted that the rival's contentions were "dangerous," were "seductive to the best minds." But the inconsistency was only apparent, for both the weakness and the seduction were of Mr. Eliot's invention, and came to the same thing in his method of attack. They issued, indeed, from the accusation that Professor Babbitt's humanism was only a new humanitarianism — disguised, chastened, above all educated — but humanitarianism still. For Mr. Eliot's belated discovery that Professor Babbitt was something different from an apostle of "general culture" led him — not to further study and a real effort to elucidate the difference — but to T. E. Hulme.

[2] I cannot think the publication of this essay fortunate. There was a real need for something of the sort, but no compulsion to meet it hastily. And Mr. Foerster — unintentionally, of course — gives the impression that he speaks authoritatively for humanism rather than for himself, which has proved a source of trouble. It is a misfortune, too, that this brief, least satisfactory portion of the book has distracted attention from the four solid studies preceding it. In these studies Mr. Foerster's thorough scholarship, sound judgement, and brilliancy of presentation are finely exhibited.

II

Of Hulme Mr. Jacob Epstein portentously says: "Like Plato and Socrates, he drew the intellectual youth of his time around him." While he lived — he was killed in action in September, 1917, early in his thirty-fifth year — he cast his spell chiefly through conversation. But he had vast literary designs, and kept notebooks. And his *Speculations* (1924)— fragments mostly, pieced together from memoranda — continue to influence intellectual youth. "I agree with what Hulme says," Mr. Eliot admits.

Not without company, Hulme believed that the early years of the present century had witnessed the last agonies of the Romantic Movement, and had brought us to a decisive turning-point in history. He looked for a renewal of full-blown religion, and hoped, in fact, to promote it. To this end he outlined an argument, partially dependent on his own view of the course of thought from ancient times to ours. This argument — like the man, as one supposes — is striking. It contains not a few acute suggestions, thrown off by an active, nervously direct mind. But, too, it involves its author in the gravest difficulties. At the outset, for example, he finds it convenient to insist that reality is divided into three *absolutely* discontinuous parts: the inorganic world, the organic, and the world of ethical and religious values. Yet he cannot take one step towards his conclusion without surreptitiously assuming that these discontinuities are after all *not* absolute. One such inconsequence inevitably begets others, and it is so with Hulme.

He concluded, uncritically, that realization of the absolute futility of existence "has formed the basis of all the great religions" — a realization best symbolized by the *wheel*. "In

November 1829, a tragic date for those who see with regret the establishment of a lasting and devastating stupidity, Goethe — in answer to Eckermann's remark that human thought and action seemed to repeat itself, going round in a circle — said: '*No, it is not a circle, it is a spiral*' "; — and so he enthroned the idea of Progress. Yet Hulme did "not in the least wish to imply any mechanical view of history as an inevitable alteration" of futilities, nor did he "in the least imagine" that the new religious era of the immediate future will be "merely . . . a new mediaevalism." In fact the history of ancient art proves the reality of Progress; and in fact the "ideology" of the last four centuries "has developed an honesty in science, and a certain conception of freedom of thought and action which will remain" — so that here also the movement of humanity according to Hulme has been, not circular, but spiral. The result is that his religion is enigmatical to us, because it remained an unsolved problem to him.

Of course, it is easy to say that the contradictions, and even puerilities, of the *Speculations* are unimportant because we have only the man's rough disjointed notes. But the testimony both of the book and of its editor impels one to doubt if Hulme could ever have resolved his difficulties. "He was not, by design," says Mr. Herbert Read, "a systematic thinker. He was, in one sense at least, a poet: he preferred to see things in the emotional light of a metaphor rather than to reach reality through scientific analysis." This is very well, for an editor's euphemism. In fact, Hulme's brilliancy and the correctness of his general, vague sense of the human situation are equally evident. But his flashes of insight were isolated, almost accidental, and not subject to any rigorous criticism. If he was fruitfully disillusioned, he was also rebellious, undisciplined, and an incurable dilettante.

In nothing is this more evident than in his high-handed treatment of history, which by main force he moulded to suit his purpose. For he asserted "that all thought since the Renaissance, in spite of its apparent variety, in reality forms one coherent whole. It all rests on the same presuppositions which were denied by the previous period. It all rests on the same conception of the nature of man, and all exhibits the same complete inability to realize the meaning of the dogma of Original Sin." As a consequence, "you get a refusal to believe any longer in the radical imperfection of either Man or Nature. This develops logically into the belief that life is the source and measure of all values, and that man is fundamentally good. . . . This leads to a complete change in all values. The problem of evil disappears, the conception of sin loses all meaning. Man may be that bastard thing, 'a harmonious character.' Under ideal conditions, everything of value will spring spontaneously from 'free personalities.' If nothing good seems to appear spontaneously now, that is because of external restrictions and obstacles. Our political ideal should be the removal of everything that checks the 'spontaneous growth of personality.' Progress is thus possible, and order is a merely negative conception."

This Hulme called Humanism: — "all thought since the Renaissance," forming "one coherent whole." Against it he opposed at every point the religious attitude, characterized by the living conviction that ethical values are "absolute and objective," and by the "conception of Perfection." "In the light of these absolute values, man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect; . . . he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline — ethical and political. Order is thus not merely negative, but creative and liberating."

As far as it goes, this passage concerning the religious atti-

tude is profoundly true; and the preceding passages are equally true of one stream of naturalistic thought since the Renaissance. Obviously by Humanism Hulme meant what other men are agreed in calling Humanitarianism. And obviously this explains and disposes of Mr. T. S. Eliot's essays. Mr. Eliot's odd admonition to Professor Babbitt was based upon the inference that if Professor Babbitt did not stand simply for "general culture," was an individualist, and could not accept Christian dogma as sanctioned by revelation — why, then, he must be, despite appearances, an exponent of Hulme's "Humanism," which is to say, Humanitarianism. Thereupon Mr. Allen Tate developed the argument, largely from hints furnished by Mr. Eliot, but with extraordinary self-assurance, in an obscure and badly confused article, "The Fallacy of Humanism." Mr. Eliot liked this so well that he not only printed it in *The Criterion*,[3] but used it extensively in the

[3] It was also printed, after material revision, in *The Hound & Horn*, January, 1930. I have dealt with this article (as printed in *The Criterion*) separately, in an essay entitled "Humanism and Impudence" (*The Bookman*, January, 1930). Mr. Tate's answer and my "Final Note" appended thereto were published in *The Bookman*, March, 1930. Since the completion of the present essay, two attacks on humanism have been published which are in part (though only in part) related to those of Messrs. Eliot and Tate: "Self-Critical America," by Mrs. Mary M. Colum (*Scribner's Magazine*, February, 1930), and "Humanism and Scholarship," by Professor W. S. Knickerbocker (*Sewanee Review*, January, 1930). As an attack on humanism, neither essay is worth serious attention, though both contain certain isolated observations which are sound. Professor Knickerbocker's article is, on the whole, rambling, muddle-headed, and ill-informed. Mrs. Colum, unlike Professor Knickerbocker, is a capable writer, though she is a fanciful thinker. She complains of Professor Babbitt's failure to recognize the importance of "the inner surrender," which is the source of literature. One knows, of course, what that means.

Other attacks occasioned by the publication of *Humanism and America* (edited by Professor Foerster), cannot be noticed here. They form, on the whole, a convincing illustration of the poverty of current naturalistic criticism; and are remarkable for nothing so much as for ignorance — and its usual accompaniment cocksureness — for ill-temper, and for a stupid facility in missing the point. Mr. Edmund Wilson has attained an unenviable eminence in the composition of self-defeating abuse.

writing of his "Second Thoughts." And Mr. Eliot cannot be called a critic of the new American humanism because clearly he has not even tried to understand it, to meet it. He has tried simply by the readiest means at his disposal to cast discredit upon men who seemed, from a casual inspection, to be putting forward a dangerous rival, "seductive to the best minds," of his own newly found religion. He has written as an anxious propagandist; and thus, too, is explained the note of self-justification on which his "Second Thoughts" end.

Mr. Eliot was led by Hulme—and was led astray. Doubtless some quarrels over words may be as unimportant as the vulgar think them. But, even where no more is involved, the consequence of using words wrongly is to confuse discourse, and finally to make communication impossible. And generally much more is involved. Only "the profane" "have derided the furious contests which the difference of a single diphthong excited between the Homoousians and the Homoiousians." That tempest over a syllable was, of course, the agonized conflict of the early church concerning Arianism. And Carlyle, who had once stood with "the profane" in this, later saw and spoke the truth — that "if the Arians had won, Christianity would have dwindled away to a legend." The confusion, then, between humanism and humanitarianism should not hastily be dismissed as of no importance. The two words must, in fact, be sharply distinguished from each other if just such grave distortions as Hulme was guilty of are ever to be avoided.[4]

[4] In the opening essay in his first book (*Literature and the American College*, 1908) Professor Babbitt insisted upon this: "A person who has sympathy for mankind in the lump, faith in its future progress, and desire to serve the great cause of this progress, should be called not a humanist, but a humanitarian, and his creed may be designated as humanitarianism. From the present tendency to regard humanism as an abbreviated and convenient form for humanitarianism there must arise every manner of confusion. The humanitarian lays stress al-

Hulme, as I have said, accurately described one stream of naturalistic thought. This was the modern thought in which he was interested, because he deeply — and, as I think, correctly — felt it to be false and deserving of the severest condemnation. Yet for the sake of his argument he also wanted to draw out a simple, impressive, and *absolute* contrast between "modernism" and earlier Christianity. Hence, disregarding the complex and troublesome facts, he roundly asserted that "all thought since the Renaissance" formed "one coherent whole" and was humanitarian in character. He did not venture, however, so far to violate probability as to use this word which means what he meant, but instead fell back upon "humanism" as a term which alone might plausibly bear the burden of his generalization.

Just here lay the distortion: in the pretence that Renaissance humanism, underneath its variety, led really in one sole direction, towards one sole end. It was not so. If it did lead through Rabelais and Bacon and Descartes directly to the development of modern humanitarianism in the eighteenth century, it equally led other men in quite other directions, "to fashion," for example, "a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline." Ker devoted the lecture from which I have already quoted to the purpose of showing "in a few examples how hard or even impossible it is to define the

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most solely upon breadth of knowledge and sympathy. . . . The humanist . . . is interested in the perfecting of the individual rather than in schemes for the elevation of mankind as a whole; and although he allows largely for sympathy, he insists that it be disciplined and tempered by judgment." Essentially the same distinction had been drawn, more firmly and profoundly, four years earlier by Mr. P. E. More in the concluding study in his *Shelburne Essays*, First Series. Both writers ended, it may be noted, with the quotation of Emerson's "quaint metaphor," or "curious image," as Professor Babbitt calls it: "A man must ride alternately on the horses of his private and his public nature, as the equestrians in the circus throw themselves nimbly from horse to horse," etc.

humanists' ideal so as to include all its manifestations." And he ended by insisting, "There never is any conclusion, when people meet and debate about the humanities." To Ker, moreover, Dante was among the foremost in the great company of the humanists, and spoke "for himself in the person of Ulysses":

> "Call to mind from whence ye sprang:
> Ye were not formed to live the life of brutes,
> But virtue to pursue, and knowledge high."

The truth is, indeed, that of Renaissance humanism must be said what has wittily been said of woman: that no generalization concerning her can be without evidence. Its variety was real and fundamental, because it was not in the first instance a movement of thought at all. It was the rediscovery of an instrument of life which contained potent and diversified stimulants to thought and feeling. A distinguished scholar of our day is said to pride himself upon having written a large work on the Renaissance without once mentioning it. This is more than a little childish; a new wrong does not right an old one; but the scholar in question was eminently right in so far as he merely intended to emphasize his conclusion that the Renaissance introduced no new aims, gave no new direction to life. The discoverer of the automobile did not invent transportation—not even aimless transportation. Renaissance humanism gave assurance, direction, substance, or discipline to various tendencies—tendencies which have their periods of rise and of fall, but which are perennially existent.

This is not to say, however, that criticism cannot with certainty distinguish a conviction animating some humanists of the Renaissance which extends backward in the western world ultimately to Socrates, and which has never ceased to find adherents and expression — not alone literary, but institu-

tional as well — down to our time. It can, therefore, fairly claim centrality, even in the complex manifestations of the Renaissance; — and this, the abiding soul of humanism, is, in part, very well expressed in the words which Hulme used to characterize the religious attitude. For it is the conviction that ethical values derive from and connect us with a world of perfect immaterial reality, and that in the light of these absolute values man himself must be judged to be essentially limited and imperfect, able to accomplish anything of value only by discipline, so that order is not merely negative, but creative and liberating.

This is excellently humanistic, as far as it goes. Yet if criticism can trace this conviction through the generations with certainty, it cannot do so with ease, nor can it go very much further in distinguishing a genuine historical continuity linking together the various concrete manifestations of humanism in western civilization. The reason is that the true humanist has ever been a practical man of the world; avoiding those tempting chimeras metaphysical speculation and pseudo-science; suspicious of rigid abstract formulations; preferring to define his position tentatively, by the methods of critical scrutiny, in close and fruitful relation to actual but ever-changing circumstances; avoiding the self-defeating violence of revolution; preferring to work with and through existing institutions; sacrificing sudden impressiveness to steady, quiet persistence; not expectant of victory; and content even with apparent defeat in untoward times if apparent defeat is the reward of moderation, sane judgment, disciplined taste, and a comely serenity. And hence it is that humanism, if it is ever to be understood, must be studied, not abstractly, but concretely. The attempt by abstraction and generalization to formulate a so-called "pure" humanism is a mere vanity when

it is not a mischievous delusion. A defecated humanism, equally whether it be Professor Foerster's or Mr. T. S. Eliot's, is an insubstantial shadow, because it is a humanism divorced from the concrete circumstances of time and place which, in varying ways from age to age, not only condition its expression, but give it force, importance, and weight.

III

The effort, then, to understand humanism as it exists for us today can only be fruitful in so far as we realize that this is the humanism expounded by Professor Babbitt and Mr. P. E. More. Mr. Eliot's discovery in 1928 that this humanism differs in quality from earlier humanisms was anticipated by Professor Babbitt himself in 1908.[5] It is a fact, an important fact, and augurs well; for otherwise we could not possibly expect the new American humanism to be pertinent, significant, and valuable.

Moreover, it is equally necessary to realize that contemporary humanism is not the work of Professor Babbitt alone, nor the work of Mr. More alone, but of both together. Each of them is a man of striking, self-contained independence; each, it cannot be doubted, has thought for himself and written from within; — more than this, each in qualities of temper, method, and manner may be sharply and justly contrasted with the other. Nevertheless, their very independence, their very disparities, apparent to the most casual eye, serve after all but to render more impressive the fundamental

[5] *Literature and the American College*, pp. 30-31: "Man himself and the products of his spirit, language, and literature, are treated not as having a law of their own, but as things; as entirely subject to the same methods that have won for science such triumphs over phenomenal nature. . . . The humanities need to be defended to-day against the encroachments of physical science, as they once needed to be against the encroachments of theology." See also *The New Laokoon*, pp. 213-214.

fact that, so far as humanism is concerned, their work has been mutually complementary.[6]

A single instance must here suffice to illustrate this fact. The position that man is, within limits, a morally responsible or accountable being is the indispensable basis of the new humanism, from which all else issues. Repeatedly this is insisted upon throughout Professor Babbitt's books; and along with it the important proposition that, while reason is merely instrumental and cannot lay hold on the eternal world of perfect immaterial reality, still, "the things that are above the reason" may symbolically be represented through the imagination, so that thus the will obedient to "conscience" acts at once as the warrant of the eternal world and as the means of freeing man partially from the shackles and blinding importunities of temporal existence. Yet Mr. Bandler, in the essay before mentioned, justly remarks that in Professor Babbitt's books "the will is scantily described and verbally confused with incongruous issues."[7] To the serious reader this neglect and confusion must be astonishing and profoundly disquieting. But should that reader turn to the writings of Mr. More he would find therein the basis of the new humanism scrupulously and luminously justified. He would find the way prepared, through a long series of critical discriminations, and

[6] Because of this, the question whether one or the other was "the original humanist" is scarcely soluble and, indeed, is unimportant. The evidence from their books clearly indicates that Mr. More was the first to develop the dualism which forms the basis of the new humanism, but that Professor Babbitt was the first to use the word. It is likely enough, however, that this evidence does not fully reveal the truth — that, in fact, the new humanism was born of the friendly intercourse and common studies of the two men during their years of preparation for critical activity. Mr. More, it should be added, has on several occasions acknowledged his "large indebtedness" to Professor Babbitt.

[7] The following *unexplained* references to "things above the reason" and to "free" will may be found in *The New Laokoon* alone: pp. 91, 92, 95, 98, 108, 131, 132, 135, 147, 166, 198, 199, 201, 202, 203, 212, 228, 229, 244.

through difficulties fully realized and candidly faced, for the "Definitions of Dualism" in the Eighth Series of *Shelburne Essays* and for *Platonism*, in which the dualistic philosophy common to Messrs. More and Babbitt receives its full and masterly exposition.

The importance of this I need not stress. "There is a danger," said Thomas Wilson, Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man—"there is a danger in being persuaded before one understands." Moreover, again and again the student of humanism is struck by the manner in which the writings of Messrs. Babbitt and More thus dovetail to form one structure. This is not the place to attempt any careful evaluation of their respective contributions, nor to trace in detail the share of each in their common task. I think, however, that my example is fairly representative; and I do not believe one could better indicate, in a general and brief way, the nature of the relationship between the two than by recalling another maxim of Bishop Wilson, which Arnold made famous sixty years ago, in *Culture and Anarchy:* "Two things a Christian will do: Never go against the best light he has; this will prove his sincerity: and, secondly, to take care that his light be not darkness; that is, that he mistake not his rule by which he ought to go." Professor Babbitt has never gone against the best light he has had; Mr. More has taken care that his light should be not darkness. I would not, in so speaking, be misunderstood. I mean simply that Professor Babbitt has, on the whole, been more interested in the *applications* of humanism to contemporary life and literature and to the interpretation of modern history, than in the establishment of its validity; while Mr. More has, on the whole, been more concerned with the latter effort. But obviously both have concerned themselves with the "two things," and the distinction here suggested is use-

ful only if it be remembered that it is *not* absolute. And both have thus made equally essential contributions to the construction of a new humanism which stands solidly in an alien world because, being built with honesty and insight, it fulfils in terms of present conditions a permanent need.

Humanism, it goes without saying, is concerned with man, and starts from the effort to understand his true nature and thus to determine his best way of life. It began and has lived as a critical activity — as a sceptical attempt to expose the hollowness of men's pretensions, perpetually recurrent, to absolute knowledge of the whole system of reality. Those pretensions always commit men to some barbarous extreme, in conformity to which life and human activity must be interpreted. The interpretation is always forced. Some facts of immediate experience inevitably are denied; and thus sooner or later the inadequacy of accepted generalizations becomes patent, opening the way to a new venture in absolutism, destined to enthusiastic acceptance, followed by gradual disillusionment and eventual rejection.

Socrates was apparently the first man in the western world to understand this vicious circle and to dedicate himself to the attempt to break it. The *Apology* so tells the story that it became — and still remains — the best approach to humanism. Socrates came to think he had a sort of wisdom, "strictly human wisdom"; but "wisdom of a higher sort, something superhuman," something absolute, he had not, and found that humanity had it not. In obedience to divine command, as he construed it, he searched for wisdom amongst those reputed to have it. He went first to an Athenian politician "and conversed with him, and it soon became apparent that to many people and most of all to himself he seemed quite wise, whereas in truth he was not so at all. Thereupon," Socrates con-

tinues, "I undertook to show him how he was wise in opinion only and not in reality; but I only made myself a nuisance to him and to many of those about him. So I went away reflecting that at least I was wiser than this man. Neither of us apparently knows anything much worth while, but he in his ignorance thinks he knows, whereas I neither know nor think I know. Surely I may claim a little more of wisdom than he, in so far as I do not think I know what I do not know." And after long search, with always similar results, Socrates concluded: "The truth would seem to be that God alone is really wise," and "that human wisdom is worth little or nothing at all." Only concerning human nature itself may we know — not perhaps what we might wish — but enough to determine rightly our course. For, consulting honestly our own experience and that of others, we may learn beyond all doubt that "wherever a man takes his post, deeming it best for him there, or wherever the leader places him, there he should abide, awaiting danger, taking account of nothing, be it death or whatsoever else, save only dishonour." This is truth, final, absolute: "that it is an evil and shameful thing to do wrong and to disobey our superior, whether human or divine."

These familiar words, though torn from their context, and without a commentary, still lay open the heart of all serious humanism. And they say precisely what Hulme said when he attempted briefly to characterize the essential factors in the religious attitude. They say, too, precisely what Messrs. More and Babbitt have said in the language of our time, in the light of our present situation.

At the close of the nineteenth century naturalism enjoyed a supremacy unprecedented and almost without serious challenge from educated men. Its triumph resulted from the triumphs of "modern science." Already, I believe, it is be-

coming difficult for young men to realize the position naturalism then held. But no one will understand the rise of the new humanism, nor the world in which we now live and the strength of opposition which it continues, and will continue, to exert against humanism, who does not realize the weight of unescapable evidence on the side of naturalism. It is, really, incalculable;[8] and at the beginning of this century it was everywhere felt to be overwhelming. More, naturalism was welcomed eagerly, in a great burst of optimistic feeling, because of the doctrine of progress in which it was prevailingly formulated, which was commonly thought to receive fresh authentication with each new and profitable triumph of "modern science."

Scepticism concerning the "march of progress" was not, however, wholly quenched. Men of steady vision lived even through the aesthetic and progressive 'nineties. And in 1902 George Gissing wrote: "I hate and fear 'science' because of my conviction that, for long to come if not for ever, it will be the remorseless enemy of mankind. I see it destroying all simplicity and gentleness of life, all the beauty of the world; I see it restoring barbarism under a mask of civilization; I see it darkening men's minds and hardening their hearts; I see it bringing a time of vast conflicts, which will pale into insignificance 'the thousand wars of old,' and, as likely as not, will whelm all the laborious advances of mankind in blood-drenched chaos. . . . . Oh, the generous hopes and aspirations of forty years ago! Science, then, was seen as the deliverer; only a few could prophesy its tyranny, could

[8] I do not, of course, mean to imply that it is conclusive. In an essay entitled "What is Humanism?" (*Virginia Quarterly Review*, April, 1930) I have dealt at some length with "modern science" as the basis of the contemporary species of bigotry which a serious humanism is bound to oppose.

foresee that it would revive old evils and trample on the promises of its beginning."

Yet Gissing, though his eye was prophetic, could see no hope of deliverance. He could not bow reverently before "science" with the multitude, but "to rail against it," he added, "is as idle as to quarrel with any other force of nature." With this, I should suppose, Messrs. More and Babbitt must certainly have agreed when *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* was published. For already they must have concluded that man himself always has been and will be his own remorseless enemy, but that, too, man himself contains within him the seeds of his deliverance. Already they must have seen that "science," in its applications merely a channel of blind force, had become with the many an unparalleled agent of greed and distraction; while, amongst the teachers of men, in its implications "science" had become merely the basis of a new and peculiarly subversive absolutism. "Science," then, was a thing indifferent. The evil which Gissing saw was real, but issued from men themselves who, at the same time, recoiled from their own deeds. This was the unambiguous, universal testimony of experience, in our day no less than in the past, and it could have only one meaning — that man had a divided nature.

It is the high distinction of Messrs. More and Babbitt that they reached this conclusion at a time when every living influence was arrayed against it, and that they held their ground and steadily developed a new humanism from this basis without regard for wilful misunderstanding or wilful opposition. They repudiated equally monism of whatever kind and anarchical pluralism because these all sought in different ways to absorb human nature into some one sole reality, some absolute of rationalism or some absolute of sheer irrationalism.

The effect in every case, they affirmed, was the denial of human nature as we know it immediately in experience. And really to be faithful to experience, really to carry out the heralded boast of scientific naturalism, they insisted, was to recognize that man's nature is dual, a paradoxical union of opposites, impenetrable to discursive reason but patent to observation.

This is the real issue raised by contemporary humanism. For dualism is an answer — and, the humanist would say, the only intelligible, completely justified answer — to the deepest question man has to ask. And the answer, in affirming man's moral accountability, gives real meaning and worth to the individual's life. Further, it also affirms the validity of man's distinction, imperfect though it may be, between evil and good, and thus sanctions the effort to achieve and maintain standards of judgment, in terms of which a disciplined life may be led. And a life so disciplined is the only life which is "creative and liberating"— the only life which can eventuate in distinctively human happiness.

And finally, in opposing to contemporary naturalism the paradox of dualism, the humanist in our day ranges himself on the side of religion, without which, as Professor Babbitt has straightforwardly said, humanism cannot subsist.[9] Logically, indeed, the humanism of Messrs. Babbitt and More leads unescapably to a religion based, not on the authority of tradition, but on the philosophical implications of dualism. And this philosophical religion it has been the work of Mr. More's later years to develop in his series of studies, *The Greek Tradition.* In so doing, Mr. More has raised the great question whether or not this religion can be identified with a re-interpreted historic Christianity, and he has thrown the

[9] *Rousseau and Romanticism,* p. 380.

weight of his learning and judgment on the side of an affirmative answer. It is scarcely surprising that this attempted identification should have obscured, in some quarters and for the time-being, the real bearing and import of Mr. More's work. But it is safe to say that, however the question concerning historic Christianity may eventually be answered, still, the more *The Greek Tradition* is studied, and the better it is understood, the more clearly will it be recognized as the logical completion and the crowning work of the new humanism.

ROBERT SHAFER

MUSIC CHRONICLE

Aspects of Gabriel Fauré

Gabriel Fauré is known in this country almost entirely through works written before he had attained his forty-second year. Among these are the First Violin Sonata, the two quartets for piano and strings, a few piano pieces, and such songs as *Les Berceaux*, *Après un Reve*, *Clair de Lune*, *Les Roses d'Ispahan*, which are on every singer's program. Although he lived to the age of seventy-nine and wrote copiously up to the end, little or no curiosity is shown about the productions of his last thirty-seven years. The Requiem Mass, Opus 45, has never, so far as I know, been given an integral performance in this country; nor has the Opera *Pénélope* ever been performed here. Of the great song-cycles, *La Bonne Chanson*, Opus 61, written in 1891, is known to a few singers; *La Chanson d'Eve*, Opus 95 (1907), to none that I have ever spoken to or heard of. His Theme and Variations, for piano, Opus 73, *Prométhée*, Opus 82 (requiring a somewhat elaborate setting), the Second Violin Sonata, Opus 108 — to mention only a few of the high points, and to say nothing of the productions of the flowering last five years of his life — have all suffered similar neglect. It is the more regrettable since these later works are in many ways far closer to us in aim and idiom than the early ones. But before discussing the relation of his later style to present tendencies, it would be well to try to determine why its evolution was not more generally followed.

The reasons are perhaps fairly obvious. For one thing, Fauré never showed any interest in orchestration. He regarded it as of such little importance that it is not even certain how much of his orchestral scoring he did himself. That of *Prométhée*, designed for performance in the open air, and calling for a large number of brass instruments, was entrusted to the leader of a military band. Most of the scoring of *Pénélope* is said to have been realized either by Vincent D'Indy or Paul Dukas, but the secret has been carefully kept, and it is only safe to assume that Fauré was not responsible for very much of it. His neg-

lect of the orchestra runs parallel to his general lack of interest in all special effects of sonority, whatever the instrument or combination of instruments he happened to employ. The accompaniments of his songs show little variety of figuration, considering the large number he wrote. They are for the most part based on time-worn formulae, consisting either of straight four-part harmony (sometimes broadened by the addition of an octave), or else of broken or syncopated chords. Those of the latest songs are in general even more simplified than those of the earlier ones: With the exception of *Danseuse* (from *Mirages*, Opus 113) one finds nothing in them so *recherché* as the accompaniments of *Les Berceaux*, *Mandoline* or *Eau Vivante* (from *La Chanson d'Eve*). The same thing is true of his works for piano alone. These contain nothing in the way of pianistic effects which would have surprised Schumann. In his chamber works there are a few exceptions to this general rule, but they are so rare, and for the most part of such minor importance, that they hardly need to be mentioned — save perhaps for the beautiful effect of the octaves played by the viola and 'cello, *con sordino* at the close of the Andante of the Second Piano Quartet.

Individualities as diverse as those of Strauss, Debussy and Strawinsky are nowhere more apparent than in the character of their instrumentation. The individuality of Strauss is of course chiefly apparent in his handling of the orchestra; that both of Debussy and Strawinsky equally so in their handling of smaller combinations, and of the piano. Allowing these three to be perhaps the most widely-recognized landmarks in the musical evolution of the past forty years, it is evident that through them and their followers the world has been brought largely to appraise individualities on an aspect which in Fauré remains practically blank.

The same period of time (dating back approximately to the moment when Fauré's new productions ceased to excite general interest) has witnessed the gradual breaking up of the old harmonic system, with attendant searchings after new idiom and new matter for expression. In this also Fauré had no share. Within what remained essentially the bounds of the old system (though he did much to liberate and enrich it in the way of modulations, irregular cadences, and the movement of basses), he attained to an extraordinary freedom and subtlety of expression. But his freedom, unlike Debussy's, was of a dis-

creet, internal kind, such as could give scandal only to the professional musician — as Saint-Saëns was at first scandalized at the freedom of *La Bonne Chanson,* applauded by an unsuspecting public. The fact that it was founded rather on the expansion of traditional principles than on emancipation from them, deprived him of that external brilliance of originality which contributed so much to Debussy's influence. That he sincerely respected Debussy we gather from the fact that he asked him to sit on the Juries of the Conservatoire shortly after having, in 1905, been named director of it. Such a request must at that time have caused a good deal of comment in official musical circles. But beyond that of respect, his feeling for Debussy hardly went. Never greatly tempted, or even impressed, by the latter's innovations, he continued to pursue his own train of thought with the same quiet integrity that had steered him through his earlier and far more stormy experience of Wagner.

Yet it may seem in a way surprising that he should have evaded Debussy more completely than he did Wagner. (*Prométhée* is not without traces of the latter's influence.) That he was nearly twenty years older and hence sure of his own style by the time Debussy's had become formed, need not have prevented him from being influenced by the younger man — perhaps in somewhat the way Haydn was in his old age influenced by Mozart; for just as a certain Mozartian complexity of feeling sometimes finds its way into the later Haydn, so one might have expected the last act of *Pelléas,* or the pathetic anxious diffidence of *"Veux-tu? Viendras-tu? — Ce sera le dernier soir . . .* " of Act IV, to have left its mark on Fauré. But there appears to have been something not wholly sympathetic to him in Debussy's superfine uneasiness of sensibility — a nostalgia seldom far from despair. Perhaps, too, he disliked what may have seemed to him facile in certain Debussyist harmonic progressions, and superficial (or tending to become so) in the emphasis he laid on color. But we need feel little regret at Fauré's having apparently remained untouched by Debussy's *"petite fille qui pleure au bord de l'eau,"* since the things that *did* touch him led him to imagine such pages as bring to a close the first and last acts of *Pénélope,* the close of the first movement of the G-minor Quartet, or the long lines of the Allegro of the Second Violin Sonata, so buoyant that they seem to be lapped by sheer light. Nor need we regret that he kept his independence in the matter of style.

Yet it is in any case certain that in proportion as Debussy's work began to be recognized and his influence to spread, Fauré automatically became neglected, all but forgotten — a local Parisian product, whose new works were even there received with understanding only by a comparatively small group of initiates.

Later, when realms of sonority and rhythm had been still further explored by Strawinsky and others, and emancipation from traditional harmonic principles was in many quarters complete, Fauré's world came to seem more restricted than ever. What has perhaps chiefly helped Strawinsky to win the large following he enjoys today is the great power and individuality of his rhythms. But Fauré's individuality is hardly better revealed in his choice of rhythms than in his choice of sonorities. Indeed, his poverty of rhythmic resource is sometimes a serious fault. At the opening of the last act of *Pénélope,* where Ulysses enters, full of rage and vengeance, and music with a direct, brutal rhythm is required, Fauré finds nothing better than a kind of sombre, heavy-footed Scherzo — adequate enough, but not to be compared in effectiveness with the music belonging to scenes of less violent character. The close of Act II (after Ulysses has been hailed by the shepherds as their king), has, on the contrary, great rhythmic strength; but this arises from the contrapuntal handling of the Ulysses *motif,* combining and dovetailing it in such a way as to make something highly complex and forceful out of elements not especially so in themselves.

But if rhythm never became for him the almost separate vehicle for expression that it so often is in Strawinsky, and if his rhythms lack originality and often variety, nevertheless, owing to the wonderful freedom and elasticity of his basses, they are seldom tedious or flat. For the bass (possibly because it is the voice that comes nearest to reproducing the toneless accents — of purely rhythmic value — of the drum), where it is alive and freely moving, imparts rhythmic life and rhythmic freedom of movement to the whole. An admirable instance of this is to be found in *Cygne sur l'Eau* (from Mirages). Immediately preceding the words *"Il glisse, roi hautain —"* the accompaniment begins an appropriately dark, oily, sliding motion (extremely simple, as always, in figuration, but not so harmonically) which continues on for two pages. What chiefly sustains our rhythmic interest in this passage is the bass, moving it would seem, with com-

plete independence of the melody, and yet giving depth and substance to its fleeting suggestions — as on the last note of the phrase, "*Quand il passe, au seuil d'une lune d'argent,*" it sweeps up, like a rolling wake, a full measure behind it, and completes the cadence which, on the word *d'argent,* had remained suspended. *Reflets dans l'Eau,* of the same series, though moving throughout its considerable length at a most tranquil pace, is again saved by the bass (at least during a large portion of it) from a rhythmic monotony which one would suppose bound to overtake it. For though here the bass maintains a complete regularity of accent for twelve long measures, its line is so free, its profile so expressive, that every note of it adds momentum to the whole — we welcome each accent as it falls, though it always falls in the same place. Curiously enough, the first moment when the rhythm begins to lag is when Fauré halts the steady motion of the right hand and assigns it to the bass. This procedure, instead of adding new life to the rhythm, rather makes it languish, for the reason that the bass no longer moves so freely, but follows the treble in a regular and somewhat hollow-sounding downward sequence, so that its accents fall flatly and monotonously on the ear.

A treatise could be written on Fauré's bass: his way of reserving its entrance in a lower register, as in *Crépuscle* (from *La Chanson d'Eve*), or as in Danseuse (at the words *vase svelte,* and later at *pieds etroits*), on a principle which he undoubtedly learned from Bach, but which few since Bach have applied so effectively. Again, one could treat of his valuable extension of certain laws governing the bass's direction of movement, but that would be difficult to illustrate without the musical text. Not to listen to the bass when hearing a work of Fauré, is generally to miss half of what he has to say. I have emphasized its importance as a rhythmic factor. Needless to add, the freedom which characterizes it is of equal importance harmonically.

Fauré's individuality, if it failed to leave its mark on his use of, and method of combining, instruments, or on his choice of rhythms, is apparent in every chord he employed, though he never invented any new ones. As Nadia Boulanger once wrote of him in this connection: "*Entre ses mains, ces choses usuelles sont devenues précieuses.*" There is hardly a progression, hardly a modulation or cadence, especially in his later work, that, taken from its context, would not still retain the unmistakable stamp of his authorship. There are, of course, certain

progressions which he uses more frequently than others, certain suspensions which he never tired of, and made, as it were, definitely his own. But underlying these more obvious earmarks there is a flexibility and precision of nuance, and a depth of expressiveness, in his handling of straight four-part harmony, that one hardly finds equalled in anyone but Bach.

Now that Strawinsky has rediscovered the uses of consonant harmony, that many of the younger men are tending in a like direction, and that our ears have grown so accustomed to extremes of dissonance that we are no longer disconcerted either by its presence or absence, it would seem as though the moment were right for a more attentive and careful savouring of Fauréan harmonies. Sheer dissonance, considered as an independent factor in the pleasure or bewilderment or pain caused by a piece of music, depends for its effect upon the surprise or shock it produces; and our judgment of a work on that basis alone must always be equally superficial, whether favourable or otherwise. Certain exclusively and violently dissonant works (such as *Arcanes,* of Edgar Varèse) may seem far more effective at first hearing than at second. For what we ultimately appraise a composition on is its internal clarity and organization: its bare skeleton, however elaborately clothed, must be understandable and solid. I believe it was Gédalge (the only teacher Milhaud will admit owing anything to, and no enemy to the moderns), who maintained that if a work didn't hold together when analyzed in terms of its bass and melody alone (that is, omitting all inner voices and completed harmonies), it was a sure sign of its having some structural defect. Such a test, any of Fauré's works would pass triumphantly. Not only would their framework easily stand the strain, but, so rigid was his economy, that in many cases surprisingly little of their character or meaning would be lost in the process. In all these ways, solidity of structure, economy of means, clarity and directness of statement, such works as the Second Violin Sonata, the later songs, the Second Quintet, realize an aim that is much in view today.

A further quality of his work, and one that would win him many followers were his work better known, is his power of prolonging a melodic line over a very long period, without ever letting it flag or draw on other than its own, inherent, resources. From countless instances of this, none could be more aptly cited than the first period of

the Andante of the Second Quintet. The first eight measures, before the entrance of the piano, may seem introductory in character, but as Charles Koechlin has rightly pointed out, they should not be so considered. From the first upward-moving interval announced by the viola — a kind of *sursum corda* towards some visioned promise — to the large-spanned phrase of overflowing certainty reached twelve measures later, and reaffirmed in a downward chromatic succession of keys, that soften the light but if anything increase the certainty — as a landscape will seem to stand out more clearly with approaching dusk — and so through to the final cadence, the promise fulfilled, the eagerness appeased; — the whole thing is one line, a single *élan*.

THEODORE CHANLER

THEATRE CHRONICLE

The Green Pastures is probably the most interesting production of the year. It is amazingly good, in an entirely un-"Broadway" fashion. It is one of those rare productions that please everybody — even the newspaper reviewers, in this happy emergency, being found on the right side of the fence; though many of them, not content with being right for once, must needs go and be *too* right, and ladle out their ever-ready stock of meaningless superlatives. Some of them have taken *The Green Pastures* as their text in sermons on the commercial theatre, and tried to deduce from its existence the uselessness of permanent groups. It would perhaps be instructive to enquire what the elements in this success may be. Every success is of course in some measure a happy accident; but unless one sits on the side-lines and merely notes the result, one is obliged at least to try to see what it is that makes one play better than another.

First of all, there is the producer, "Lawrence Rivers," a stockbroker who already had several unsuccessful ventures to his credit, and who therefore cannot be given all the credit for the success. He must have had more courage and good taste than the Guild, which refused the script; but these qualities are insufficient without a "vehicle" to exercise them on.

The play itself was made by Mr. Marc Connelly from *Ol' Man Adam an' His Chillun,* a volume of Bible stories in negro dialect by Roark Bradford. The stage version, which Mr. Connelly also directed, is vastly more distinguished than the stories, so that Mr. Connelly apparently deserves a large share of the credit. He seems to have changed the book mainly by allowing the intensely dramatic quality of the Bible stories themselves to come out in the simplest terms. Indeed, the use of negro dialect and a negro cast simply enabled him to realize these splendid myths. His material suggested a method for dramatizing parts of the Bible. And it gave him a thread on which to hang the various episodes: the negroes are more like the Children of Israel than any other Americans, being a separate tribe, united by race and persecution; and *The Green Pastures* is simply the story of the troubles that God has with the chosen people from

Adam to the coming of Christ. The Negro Children of Israel here bear somewhat the same relation to the New Yorkers that the Italian nobles bore to an Elizabethan audience, they are accepted not realistically but typically. This fact, plus the naturally naïve and dramatic quality of the negroes themselves, enables the play to succeed with an entirely unrealistic method. All of which is only an attempt at analysis, not at guessing how Mr. Connelly did it; but it may serve to indicate the importance of his result.

In this he was very much helped by the acting. The man who played God had never acted before. All of the actors had the compelling honesty of those who really "make believe." This is the rarest quality on Broadway, and the most necessary for the theatre.

Finally, there was the designer, Mr. Robert Edmond Jones. Mr. Jones has saved many a bad show from hopeless mediocrity, and he has been able, with his tact, his skill, and his experience to set the style of many a more ambitious effort which might have been lost without him. In recent years, for example, he has performed this service for *Machinal*, *Serena Blandish*, and *The Commodore Marries*, to name a few that occur to one at once. In this case he was right again. The cut-out wings and the treadmill might have been taken from a nineteenth-century Southern Opera House. The designing was in key with the acting, and went far toward uniting the whole show and making it comprehensible. At the same time most of the colors and lighting captured a feeling of Sabbath freshness. The only scene which did not quite come off was that in Pharaoh's palace.

Such are the factors that contributed toward the happy result. And it must be admitted that most of them are necessarily connected with the commercial theatre. No permanent group can do a negro play the way negro actors do it. The one-hundred and fifty thousand dollars which the production is said to have cost would support a modest repertory company for a year and enable them to do five small productions. Good directors and designers are naturally interested in seeing their ideas executed as well as possible, which means expensively. Producers who want a theatre rather than a successful production are rare: it is one thing to gamble on a production, another to take the responsibility of saying baldly, "I want a certain kind of theatre." In the first case the market, which we are all used to considering a worthy and serious arbiter, is decisive; in the second the desire for a theatre.

But note that the very circumstances which make possible an occasional triumph in the commercial theatre, vastly diminish its importance. The actor who never played before may never play again. The purchase of this negro cast establishes nothing but this one play. The exhibition of negro players to a Times Square audience is hardly more significant than showing them Rhinehart's company or the Chauve Souris, which owe nothing to New York but a night's lodging, and stand practically no chance of alleviating its chaos. The designer and the author-director who so successfully coöperated here may never get together again. We must all be grateful to the producers of *Green Pastures* for getting such a beautiful result out of the unstable and stupid elements of the theatre; but it is they, rather than the commercial theatre itself, that deserve our gratitude and admiration.

Mei Lan-Fang

The performances of the Chinese actor were of the greatest interest to those who hope to see the development of a "classical" art. His acting is highly conventional according to our western notions—there is first of all, the traditional sign language by means of which passing through doors, riding horseback, rowing in boats, etc., is indicated on a stage devoid of realistic settings and properties. Then there is the almost continuous musical accompaniment and the dancing movements which continue all the time the actor is on the stage. These elements, however, are soon seen to define a *medium*, in which the artist is then able to get surprisingly realistic effects. This medium is simply the actor himself in command of all his expressive means, voice, body, rhythm—on a scale which should be the envy of our naturalistic performers. The plays, one is told, are as traditional as the stage medium, and as familiar to the audience. The audience then is interested solely in what the actor does: in his contribution. The actor, with everything established, can devote himself to the proper business of the artist, which appears to be conceived here as "imitation of life."

Imitating a drunken courtesan in terms of such a wide and well-defined medium as Mei Lan-Fang's is a very different matter from reproducing the actions of a drunken courtesan so as to create the illusion of life. The obligation to get one's effects in terms of a certain medium seems to force one to select only the significant points. There is, in fact, one begins to see, a difference between imitation and re-

production. An actress who should try to be a bawd in a realistic play would invite the audience to look at the object itself, the very bawd in question; while a Chinese audience watching Mei Lan-Fang's portrayal would be interested in the act of imitation. That I suppose is why the Chinese see nothing strange in a man's playing only female roles. They are interested in the artist's picture of the bawd in a certain medium.

Notice also that this is a very different matter from being interested in Mei Lan-Fang's personality. The definiteness of the medium prevents the possibility of the "self-expression" of romantic acting. Indeed, Mei Lan-Fang contemplates, he does not express. No one who saw him could doubt that he derived plenty of personal satisfaction from his performance, which was indeed full to the brim of gusto. But this enjoyment was of the same quality as the audience's; it came from sharing a perception with the audience. Perhaps these are some of the reasons why this acting had an authority and a universality which enabled it to carry even on Times Square, across every sort of barrier of language and unfamiliar convention. But it had behind it not only Mei Lan-Fang's years of patient training and study, but an enormously long theatre tradition.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

ART CHRONICLE

Towards Stronger Reasons for Deploring American Painting

The Art Chronicle in the last issue has raised objections. It gave no evidence for dismissing all American painting except a few landscapes by Homer, Hopper, Marin and Burchfield. One of the objectors to this despotic kind of cablegram was Mr. James W. Lane, who was kind enough to write an admirable expostulation, well worth printing at length if we had the space. Mr. Lane has made me reconsider my position. He must, however, forgive my not being able to reply to him, since I do not know nearly so much as he does about contemporary painting and since we differ on matters of taste. For instance, when Mr. Lane says: "That 'salt freshness' and that 'uncanny sensitiveness to the hour of the day' (of Marin and Burchfield) which Mr. Mayor would reserve for the American school of landscape painting are also observable, respectively, in Marquet, Asselin, Friesz, and Camoins, in Sisley, Renoir, André, and Pierre" — I can only stammer that I have never heard of Camoins or Pierre, but that I do not observe this "American note" in the rest, "respectively" or otherwise. After all, our best American landscapes may owe their unique note to our startling American weather.

The causes for the general insipidity of American painting, and its bashfulness toward men and women, lie deep in our character. Machines excite us more than persons, hence our school of arid architectural draughtsmen (Demuth, Sheeler, Blume, etc.) who focus on a steel construction as though they were sterilized cameras. Mr. Lane's letter parades the list of our painters of persons and genre: George Bellows, "Pop" Hart, Jerome Myers, William Glackens, George Luks, Everett Shinn, Gifford Beal, Jonas Lie and Guy Péne du Bois. To my notion, these painters were not "human" but half-hearted; not one risked a vision, like Goya, or had the sad courage to realize that only rubbish lay to hand, and still attempt to build with that only, like Eakins or Burchfield. I would give all Mr. Lane's portraits for some of those anonymous and intense New England "primitives" of about 1800, those heads that grip one like the donor in the Avignon *Pieta*,

and I would scrap all Mr. Lane's genre paintings for A. B. Frost's illustrations to *Br'er Rabbit* and F. D. Steele's vignettes for *Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine*. These latter no more pretended to immorality than Phil May did when he sketched for *Punch*, but their smiling veracity warms us still, when almost all their period has perished.

However, the real answer to Mr. Lane's list of American genre painters is Covarrubias. Compared with him, they seem never quite to have grasped their subjects, either as observers of their scene or as painters reconstructing it. Covarrubias has more than his draughtsmanship to teach us (even though he probably draws better than anyone else in either of the Americas); his deeper value lies in his uncompromising pertinence. He has none of that gelatinous padding that prevents most of us in the United States from ever quite *realizing* anything. His contact in seeing and in doing is fearless and instant. Perhaps this relentless clarity is as typically Latin Catholic as our evasion is American Protestant. Few Americans have dared admit that they were common men and women, as Walt Whitman and Isadora Duncan did, and be unabashed by whatever stirred in them. We live in dread of mutiny, we deny the existence of our revolting members, and so they atrophy. (We know that once we diverge from our ethic of total prohibition, we have no canon of moderation to guide us.) So we whittle ourselves, and each other, into hexagons, and then we all interlock into a unit, like cells in a sapless honeycomb. A man who is not exactly hexagonal finds no place in our scheme and rolls anywhere around, loose and useless. Now an artist is "different" because he stands a little apart from his time in order to see it. Yet for us Americans a man who is different does not exist, or at best exists, like the fishes, in a sealed element. A man will thrive on opposition, he can endure misconception, but what is he to do when he is told he does not exist? — or when he is not even *told*? Since our artists have no general public that likes and dislikes them, they are reduced to producing for each other's studios, and their work has no general usefulness, being geared to nothing. Few have struck a public to stimulate them with its reactions, as Covarrubias and Burchfield have done. Almost all our artists struggle with the void and shout into silence. Their pattern and their symbol is that remote and meaningless congregation that stands in a trance around Alfred Stieglitz's monologue.

A. Hyatt Mayor

MOVIE CHRONICLE

Some time ago The National Board of Review saw fit to select "the four best motion pictures ever made". They chose *The Birth of a Nation, Potemkin, The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* and *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. The result is curious. American productions get the benefit of historical importance only, in the naming of Griffith's picture. The logical choice would have been King Vidor's *Big Parade*. But then, Ernst Lubitsch's *Patriot* and *Marriage Circle*, Erich von Stroheim's *Greed* and *Merry Widow* or Josef von Sternberg's *Underworld* and *Docks of New York* find no place in the list. The most surprising omission is F. W. Murnau's *Sunrise*, which, in the first part, at least, is the most perfect movie I have ever seen.

Eisenstein's *Potemkin* is preferred over Pudowkin's *The End of St. Petersburg*. There is less to quarrel with in this choice. In comparison, however, Pudowkin's film comes off somewhat better than Eisenstein's. *The End of St. Petersburg* is, perhaps, more literary in subject-matter, but it is also of more even and steady dramatic quality. *Potemkin* suffers from the defects of episodic treatment which *Ten Days That Shook the World* has in excess. In both pictures Eisenstein uses the newsreel method. It is an excellent one for an impressionistic and emphatic account of events. I do not mean here the mere rapid shuffling together of objects and people, the characteristic element of *Ten Days That Shook the World*. Rather, I mean Eisenstein's tendency to single out scenes for detailed treatment: the action on the steps leading down to the harbor or the motion of the ship's engines in *Potemkin*; or, again, the soldier's at the feet of the enormous statues or Kerensky's ascent of the marble stairs in *Ten Days That Shook the World*. Objects and persons have the same value in such scenes that they would in an excellent news-shot. The scenes mentioned are dramatic in themselves and impress themselves on the memory. They do, nevertheless, give a static quality to the pictures as a whole. The drama Eisenstein is representing stands still during such scenes, for they do not fall smoothly in with the rest of the film.

Pudowkin obtains shots of equal excellence in *The End of St. Pet-*

ersburg: the sudden revolt of the soldiers or the scenes on top the Winter Palace. They are remembered, however, as climaxes, as part of the general movement of the drama. Pudowkin makes use of the newsreel method but in a more subdued fashion: scenes are emphasized in their relationship with the other scenes in the picture. And curiously enough, in spite of the smaller area of events with which *Potemkin* is concerned, individual characters and faces stand out more vividly from *The End of St. Petersburg.*

The work of both Russians is certainly of a higher order than *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari.* The German picture, an interesting curio, no doubt, and good entertainment, has some historical importance. It demonstrated the use angles could be put to; but in this respect, was nowhere near as successful as *Variety* where the camera itself was used to obtain "angles" and not simply photographs of angular scenery. *Variety*, both as an experiment and as a good picture, drops behind *The Last Laugh*, which pays more strict attention to subordinating camera effects to the story it is telling; just as Pudowkin uses the newsreel technique with less obviousness and bareness than Eisenstein.

Of French films my own knowledge is small. I have seen only one other, *Crainquebille.* At the time, 1924, it seemed quite good. So I am at a loss to say how *The Passion of Joan of Arc* compares with other French movies. By ordinary standards, *The Passion of Joan of Arc* is not a successful movie.

In it there is no movement, no speed; the symbolism, particularly the attempt to duplicate the baiting of Jesus, in Joan's cell, is cheap and tawdry; the climaxes, Joan's signing of the confession and her recantation, and death, are spent before they are reached; the dramatic moments come as a relief from the main action, for example the young monk's declaration before the court; and the close-up style is monotonous. The close-up is no more intelligently used in the French piece than in *Over the Hill* which gave endless attention to the glycerine-stained face of Mary Carr. The sorrowful, bewildered face of a saint surrounded by tormentors is no more interesting in constant exposure than the sorrowful, bewildered face of a cinema-mother surrounded by ungrateful children. An instance of effective use of faces as detail could be found in the early scenes among wretches in *Scaramouche*, made some years ago by Rex Ingram, a director of

no great talent. A camera, the Frenchmen forgot, says a thing once and for all. Its virtue lies in saying a number of things differently.

Reasons for liking *The Passion of Joan of Arc* are not difficult to discover. Joan's character and story have a constant appeal and her history subsequent to burning is an interesting one. These reasons fall beyond the picture itself. No particular credit is due the producers for following the documents of the trial so closely. A measure of dramatic license would have helped considerably. In fact, the most fatal error in style was made by devotion to accuracy; the early part of the picture depends so much upon what the prosecutors said and what Joan said back and the consternation that followed. Such a method requires too many subtitles, a fault good silent movies were steadily removing. The suspicion is immediately prompted that the picture would have made a better talkie, to provide for the exchanges between Joan and the court. I doubt it, if the same undramatic treatment by episodes, close-ups and the other enumerated faults was kept. For the main end of a drama, play, talkie or silent movie, is to be dramatic. If nothing else, the elaborate preparation by the camera and the actors for the ensuing riot would have destroyed any dramatic quality Joan's death might have had.

Clarence Brown's *Anna Christie* has little to recommend it. The talking version of O'Neill's play fails where the silent one, made by Blanche Sweet, six or seven years ago, succeeded. The talkie follows sedulously and foolishly the construction of a bad play, with two deviations from the original: the scenes at Coney Island and the long introduction concerning Marie Dressler. The comedienne is amusing, but, so far as the drama is concerned, her portion is too large. Neither of these deviations represent the proper procedure in transferring a play to the screen.

Plays, good, bad or indifferent, need almost complete rewriting when they are made into movies. The introduction of dialogue has not lessened the need for distinct movie treatment of whatever material is used. Producers and directors took some time in learning this in the early days; it is noteworthy that talkies like *Close Harmony* or *Untamed* are good because they follow the method of the silent film.

The method of the stage requires emphasis of dialogue and action that hinder the movies. Entrances and exits have to be differently planned on the screen. The close-up cannot serve as a substitute for

exchanges between characters on the stage, where the stage-picture serves as a constant background. Movement and speed on the stage have a different meaning than they have on the screen; for dialogue and action can carry the burden of transitions in the theatre that the camera must assume in the movie. The distortions of the natural size and relative positions of objects and gestures, necessary in any film, are out of place in a play. They do not then receive the kind of attention the director of a movie must give to them. Sounds accompanying action of the stage have an evenness not possible to the movies, where they must necessarily be emphasized and well selected. Again, the camera must be used to fill in the gaps. The suppression of sounds as a dramatic device is constantly made much of on the stage; for the movies it has little possibility. The screen cannot even accept the divisions into acts and scenes which the stage can put to advantage. Events in the movies have a different serial order than on the stage; the time element has a different place. Dull movies, like *Journey's End* and *Anna Christie* will continue to appear so long as methods of presentation ill-adapted to the medium of the motion picture are used.

KENNETH WHITE

CORRESPONDENCE

NEWSPAPERS, HISTORY, ETC.

It may be taken as almost axiomatic that nothing that any politician or " statesman " says , and that nothing any newspaper prints , is of any interest or value in itself. (This is even more violently true of monthly publications conducted mainly to catch advertisements.) For the careful historian a state paper or the letter of a ruler proves that at a certain date the said ruler or said government wished its opponent to believe , or hoped its opponent wd. believe , the statements therein contained.

At a certain point the difference in the drift of such statements begins to have an interest for the historian and the critic. The American press , despite the wails of extremists , is " free " relatively , that is to say it is often inaccurate : no journalist who is not both wilfully and by nature inaccurate can live by his profession. The "great journalist" has an almost beautiful talent for taking the edge off a statement , for adding just that touch of vagueness which makes his copy legible to the savage reader.

For the past fifteen years I have tried (never with the faintest success) to make occasional super-Americans understand the difference between the British centrally controlled press and the American " free press. " The difference being that different American papers will tell ten different lies about a given situation on the same day , & even in some cases the truth. The British press during the epoch referred to (and I believe for a long period before that) always told the *same lie* and always displayed the identical set of silences concerning the identical set of " unwelcome ideas or topics ". For example , in 1917 we might take it for granted that " distribution , " Zaharof , credit control , trading with the enemy etc., wd. not be mentioned.

As America's " intellectual life " was for a long time closely connected with that of England , all this has some bearing on our state of enlightenment. No American can understand the English by mere-

ly reading their printed matter. The best approach is via Levy-Bruhl's *Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inferieures:*

" un vase de forme traditionnelle ne servira qu'à l'usage ordinaire de ces vases; et on n'aura pas à craindre les ' pouvoirs ' inconnus que pourrait posséder une forme nouvelle " etc.

The first sign of any change or rift in the British hermetism appeared last summer in Baldwin's election manifesto. In this he had definitely to mention a number of things that had been sacred, secret, and taboo in 1917 to 1919. The details do not matter, all that concerns us as critics of literature and as estimators of the openess or shutness of the English state of mind is that the taboos were openly *named.* (Students of economics and politics may note that Mr Baldwin lost the election. Mr B's opponents wd. think that this was due to his being wrong. The true Englander will think that Mr B. was *religiously* wrong and that he ought not to have spoken , ought not to have named the taboos.)

More recently I have noted yet another move from the era of totem toward the age of reason. For some months the *Sunday Referee* has shown a disposition to print open discussion of a number of topics. The war , for example , ended over a decade ago. The resultant bureaucracy is not yet very much discussed , but the subject of war itself has received a good deal of attention. Each week the Referee removes one more fleck of paint and brass polish from the effigy of Military Glory. On March 9th they printed ¾ of a column of discussion of a German publication dealing with the increase of imports into Holland and the Scandinavia countries from 1914 to 1919.

I take it that during the war " everyone " in London knew that the war was being prolonged because traders on both sides were selling "necessities " to neutrals with the knowledge or intentional ignorance that these necessities wd. help the other side to go on fighting.[1] There was the definite scandal of " Mertons , " etc.

It is however both ironical and interesting that Germany shd. be letting the cats out of the bags.

We now have two clearly defined classes of war profiteers:

A. those that sell at magnificent price to their own governments.

B. those that sell at still better price to the enemy (technically via some neutral.)

[1] cf. E. P. Cantos XVIII and XIX.

This is a distinct gain because all wars , all accentuation of frontiers , copyright infamicities , barriers to free communication of ideas , such as section 211 of the U. S. penal code, etc., impede the intellectual life. In somewhat similar manner all idiotic laws which impede centralization are also a detriment. The hatred of centralization from 1100 A.D. onward , and probably from 11000 B.C. onward , has been largely due to the fear that the central power (magical , ecclesiastical , political , policeical , or whatever) wd. interfere with the predilections and customs of the local groups. America has lost ten years and probably thirty years of intellectual development by reason of inane commotion caused by the XVIIIth abomination , which was caused by . . . . ignorance of history , and other less pardonable causes. Money that shd. be spent on enlightenment is spent on tyranny etc ., all of which deflects from my particular point, which , however , I can summarize :

One English paper is breaking through the insular taboos. The actual processes and mechanisms causing and prolonging war are being clearly and openly discussed even in England. On the other hand , the largest American endowment specifically aimed at the study of this subject continually refuses to pay any attention to the *causes* of war and devotes all its resources to a tabulation of results, as anyone can see for himself by referring to the annual report of that Endowment. Dr. Butler, the figurehead or trained seal of this institution, contents himself with elegies on the state of international poesy.

There are points , a very limited number , at which the government , or rather the misgovernment , of a country becomes the affair of an author , however determined he may be to attend to his own affairs in the narrowest possible sense of that term. I might almost say that the good government of a country is no affair of an author's , and that only outrageous mismanagement of specific details concerns him. So long as laws are made with even moderate sense , a writer shd. stick to his composition as hermetically as an inventing chemist sticks to his laboratory.

If , however , a writer whose subject matter is and forever must be the mind and nature of man , is unaware of what is going on in his immediate temporal and spatal circumjacence , he is a mere fool.

When carried to a certain degree, the maladministration of an educational system , stupidity in the teaching of history , idiotic laws

due to ignorance of legislature, both attain and are due to the mental realm and the indolence or cowardice of the literati.

Contempt for the literary generations that preceded us in America will increase as their mental limitations become more obvious and the temporary extenuating circumstances sink into the muddy unknown ; i.e., one will see what but no longer why such and such individuals were regarded as the national writers.

Certain specific laws and regulations are contrary to the welfare of letters in America in 1930, namely (1.) article 211 of the penal code (re/ contraceptives and the classics , empowering analphabetic postal clerks to interfere with circulation of same).

(2) our copyright law , originally designed to favour the printing trade at the expense of the mental life of the country. The congressmen who are trying to purge this clot, and the registrar of copyright , now combine to inform me that the printers have seen the light . The rest of their information amounts to a statement that the blockage is due to the bureaucratic mind and a mania for " getting it all into one bill " ; i.e., the welfare of letters is postponed until cinema and radio , and by now I suppose talki-o and smellio , rights have been puddled and muddled and strained out to the satisfaction of all the " parties interested ".

(3) all extant and future impediments to travel ; all accentuations of frontiers. I say " and future , " because as fast as a Quinn or a sane man of any kind eliminates any such clog , some degenerate imbecile proposes a new aggravation.

No man liveth to himself or dieth to himself. These disparate and apparently unrelated impediments have general roots in common.
I. The general ignorance of what the democratic idea in the first place WAS. That is to say , the idea of representative govt. was not that legislative bodies shd. represent the momentary idiocy of the multitude or be merely registrative. The relatively small number of colonials meant each district and section to pick the men best qualified to make laws , by which they meant educated , having perhaps some knowledge of law , history (even of letters) or some sense of responsibility .
II. It is a flaming outrage that men of the calibre of Bryan , Borah , Volstead and Smoot shd. follow Washington , J. Q. Adams , Jefferson , in the national annals. It is a regression from the XVIIIth

into the XVIIth century. Moreover , it cd. not occur if history were properly taught in the grade schools.

I may say that having emerged from the grade schools , and having taken some specialized university courses in American History , I never came on a trace of the method desired. From the reports of the American Historical Assn. it might even be doubted whether the professional historians have any clear idea what they are at , but at any rate , and as minimum , one is safe in claiming that even the "well-educated American" has very dim ideas re/ what Washington , Adams and Jefferson aimed at. Brodes Adams, in his introduction to H. A.'s *Degradation of Democratic Dogma* , brushes the particular questions of Washington and J. Q. Adams , but does not " erect it into a principle " , or take any notice of Jefferson (a party opponent) .

The Sane Method of Studying History consists (or wd. if it were ever practiced, consist) in learning what certain great protagonists intended , and to what degree they failed in forcing their program on the mass .

For example : Washington's limited objective re/ the Potomac waterway (cited by B. Adams.)

J. Q. Adams' intention of conserving national wealth for purpose of national education and civilization (cited by B. Adams.)

Jefferson's continual struggle to import civilization from Europe (getting measurements of la Maison Carrée, etc.; not cited by either B. or H. Adams.)

If the American school child (infant or adult) were taught to regard the historic figures as men who tried to construct something , instead of being told that they cut down cherry trees , prayed in the snow etc. , the American voter wd. be less likely to approve a relapse into the mental obfuscations of Thuringia in the age of Louis XIV.

That is to say : at the end of the Thirty Years War certain facts were obvious to Leibniz which have not yet dawned upon terbakker-chewin savages from Utah and Missouri, elected by and for the peasantry of them states.

Incidentally , when Mr. Menken invented the phrase "American peasantry , " people thought he was being funny. His error was to omit photographs . He shd. have collaborated with Doris Ulmann.

I don't mean to limit this "method " to American History. As

method it applies anywhere , to Leibniz himself , or to Leo X.

The second phase of the method is , obviously , the study of why the intentions failed or succeeded to the degrees recorded. *E.g.*, Leo X. failed or very considerably sidetracked the Renaissance because he was living a life of intellectual detachment in a centre of culture. He judged Luther as an intellect and not as a social and political force. It never occurred to him that anyone cd. take Luther's ideas seriously , and he failed to see the liaison between ideas and the collection of (Papal) taxes. Hence , after some interval , the Thirty Years War and the very great waste of Leibniz' time trying to effect reconciliations.

In conclusion:

It ought to be obvious that the method wd. not only save a great deal of time to the student in giving some sort of form to his study , but it wd. save the time of the Senate. They wd. not in 1930 be removing or trying to remove rubbish from the mind of Smoot that had been removed from the realm of human enlightenment before the year 1700.

In his search for a science of history Henry Adams , I think , erred in that he started gunning about for an analogy outside history : i.e. , in astronomy, before he had exhausted the study of relations inside his subject (history) itself.

EZRA POUND

BOOK REVIEWS

A DISTINGUISHED POET

THE BRIDGE, *a Poem, by Hart Crane. Limited edition. Paris: The Black Sun Press.* 96 *pages.* $10.

The variety of form and style that Mr. Crane successfully employs in this work testifies to his technical proficiency, and the richness of his poetic texture proves him to be endowed with gifts of the highest order. *The Bridge* is his second volume, and it more than fulfills the expectations aroused by the appearance of his first, *White Buildings*, in 1926. It is a collection of fifteen poems grouped in eight sections and tied together by a single theme. The subject of the poem derives from Brooklyn Bridge, which is at once fact, metaphor, and symbol; it quickly expands into a vision of an heroic American past and a divination of our spiritual future. Beyond this the theme is difficult to describe.

This difficulty appears at a glance to be the best proof of the poet's complete success: he everywhere transforms the subject into something rich and strange. The poem as a whole says vastly more than any literal paraphrase of it could possibly convey, if such a paraphrase could be written; for its logical meaning has an elusiveness that is singularly incompatible with the emotional intention, which is simple, and can be reduced to a phrase like "the grandeur of America" or "the magnificent future of America." Crane himself seems to have felt the discrepancy, for, following Coleridge, he has given us a marginal commentary on about half of the poem. This gloss, however, is obscure (though beautifully written), and it does not quite succeed with what I take its intention to be — to simplify the thread of the historical and symbolic continuity, by which the reader may proceed into the enormously complicated style.

The fifteen poems, taken as one poem, suffer from the lack of a coherent plot, whether symbolic or narrative: the coherence of the

work consists in the personal quality of the writing — in mood, feeling, and tone. In the line by line texture Mr. Crane has perfect mastery over the quality of his style; but it lacks an objective pattern of ideas elaborate enough to carry it through an epic or heroic work. The single symbolic image, round which the whole poem centers, is at one moment the actual Brooklyn Bridge; at another, it is any bridge or "connection"; at still another, it is a philosophical pun and becomes the basis of a series of analogies. In "Cape Hatteras," for example, the aeroplane and Walt Whitman are related "bridges" to some transcendental truth. The poet has not observed the distinction between a metaphor and a philosophical idea.

Because the idea is variously metaphor, symbol, and analogy, it tends to make the poem static. The poet takes it up, only to be forced to put it down again *when the poetic image of the moment is exhausted.* The idea does not, in short, fill the poet's mind; it is the starting point for a series of magnificent short flights, of beautiful inventions connected only in analogy — which explains the merely personal passages, which are obscure, and the lapses into sentimentality. The idea is not sufficiently objective and articulate in itself; it lags after the poet's vision; it appears and disappears; and in the intervals Crane improvises, often beautifully, is in the flight of the aeroplane, sometimes badly, as in the discourse on Whitman in the same poem.

In the great epic and philosophical works of our tradition, notably the Divine Comedy, the intellectual groundwork is not only simple philosophically; we not only know that the subject is personal salvation, just as we know that Mr. Crane's is the grandeur of America: we are given the complete articulation of the idea down to the slightest detail, and we are given it objectively apart from anything the poet is going to say about it. When the poet extends his perception, there is a further extension of the groundwork ready to meet it and discipline it, and to compel the invention of the poet to stick to the subject. It is a game of chess; neither side can move without consulting the other. Crane's difficulty is that of modern poets generally; they play the game with half of the men, the men of sensibility, and because they can make any move, the significance of all moves is obscure.

If we subtract from Crane's idea what he has to say about it, we have left only the static abstraction, "the grandeur of America," which

is not only incapable of further elucidation on the logical plane, but actually obstructs it.

The theme of *The Bridge* is, in fact, an emotional over-simplification of a subject-matter that Crane did not, on the plane of narrative and fact, simplify at all. The poem is emotionally homogeneous and simple — it contains a single purpose; but because it is logically unclarified it is emotionally confused. America stands for a passage into new truths. Is this the meaning of American History? The poet has every right to answer yes, and this he has done. But just what in America or about America stands for this? Which American history? The historical plot of the poem, which is the groundwork on which the symbolic bridge stands, is arbitrary and broken, where the poet would have gained an overwhelming advantage by choosing a single period or episode, a concrete event with all its dramatic causes, and by following it up minutely, and being bound to it. In short, he would have gained an advantage could he have found a subject to stick to.

Does American culture afford such a subject? It probably does not. After the seventeenth century the sophisticated history of the scholars came into fashion; our popular, legendary chronicles come down only from the remoter European past. It is a sound impulse on Crane's part to look for an American myth, some simple version of our past that lies near the center of the American consciousness; an heroic tale with just enough symbolic morality to give his mind freedom and play. The soundness of his impulse is witnessed also by the kind of history in his poem: it is inaccurate, and it will not at all satisfy the sticklers for historical fact: it is the history of the motion picture, of the most naïve patriotism. This is sound; for it ignores the scientific ideal of truth-in-itself, and looks to a cultural truth which might win the spontaneous allegiance of the mass. It is on such simple integers of truth, not truth of fact but of religious necessity, that men unite. The American mind was formed on the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, which broke down the European truths and gave us a temper deeply hostile to the making of new religious truths of our own.

The impulse in *The Bridge* is religious, but the soundness of an impulse is no warrant that it will create a sound art form, which depends on too many factors beyond the control of the poet. The age is scientific and pseudo-scientific, and our philosophy is corrupt. And it is possibly this circumstance that has driven the religious attitude into

a corner where it lacks the right instruments for its defense and growth, and where it is in a vast muddle about just what these instruments are. Perhaps this corruption of the intellect is responsible for Crane's unphilosophical belief that the poet, unaided and isolated from the people, can create a myth. If anthropology has destroyed the credibility of myths, it has shown us how they rise: their growth is mysterious from the people as a whole; and it is probable that no one man ever put myth into history. It is still a nice problem among higher critics, whether the authors of the Gospels were deliberate myth makers, or whether their minds were simply constructed that way; but the evidence favors the latter. Mr. Crane is a myth maker, and in an age favorable to myths he would have written a mythical poem in the act of writing an historical one.

For, American history being vast and disordered, and as various as American citizens (my own conception of it is radically different from Mr. Crane's), there was no settled version for the poet to draw upon and intensify. The episodes of *The Bridge* follow out of no inherent necessity in the theme, for they are arbitrary, and appear not organically but analogously. The form is static; each section is a new start, and but for the broken chronology the poem constantly begins over again.

It is difficult to agree with those critics who find the work a single poem and as such an artistic success. It is a collection of lyrics, the best of which are not surpassed by anything in American literature. The writing is most distinguished when Crane is least philosophical, *when he writes from sensation.* "The River" is a masterpiece of order and style; it alone is enough to place Crane in the first rank of American poets living or dead. Equally good but less ambitious are the "Proem: To Brooklyn Bridge," and "Harbor Dawn," and "The Dance" from the section called "Powhatan's Daughter."

These poems bear only the loosest sort of relation to the symbolic demands of the theme; they merely fit into the loose historical pattern or extend the slender structure of analogy running through the poem. They are primarily lyrical, and each has its complete form; it stands alone. The poem "Indiana," written presumably to complete the pattern of "Powhatan's Daughter," does not stand alone, and it is one of the most astonishing performances ever made by a poet of Crane's genius. "The Dance" gives us the American background for the com-

ing white man, and "Indiana" carries the stream of history to the pioneer West. It is a nightmare of sentimentality and false writing: Crane is at his most philosophical in a theme in which he feels no poetic interest whatever.

The breakdown of the poem as an historical epic and the great distinction of the individual poems define, I believe, the range of Crane's poetry. It is lyrical. When he philosophizes explicitly in his verse, the doctrine is a sentimental muddle of Walt Whitman and the pseudo-primitivism of Sherwood Anderson and Dr. W. C. Williams, raised to a vague and transcendental reality. The impulse of the poem is, as I have said, religious, but in its lack of any religious structure it does not rise to a religious and tragic vision. Crane's vision is that of the naturalistic, romantic poet, and it vacillates between two poles. A buoyant optimism of the Whitman school and the direst Baudelairean pessimism exist side by side, unfused. The effect of that section of the poem intended as an Inferno, "The Tunnel," is largely nullified by the anti-climactic lapses into an infernal vision in the midst of panegyric. Crane's talent is romantic and mixed, and it does not survive the requirements of an extended objective pattern.

In this there is a similarity to the impulse of *Une Saison d'Enfer;* but there is a difference which is fundamental. Rimbaud achieved the mixed and disorganized surface of the poem by means of a process of deliberate dissociation. Crane begins with dissociation and tries to organize his pattern. In the case of Rimbaud there is a powerful intellectual drama resulting from his struggle against the intellectual order that he inherited; but Crane, at the end of the romantic movement, when the dissociation is all accomplished, struggles with the problem of finding an intellectual order. It is the romantic process reversed, and the next stage in the process is not romanticism at all.

Yet the very mixture of Crane's vision, when it stays on the lyrical plane, surcharges his verse with an inimitable richness of rhythm and style, and suffuses over it an untranslatable quality of immense poetic interest. In "The River" and "Harbor Dawn" he writes out of sensibility, and here his "philosophy" is an implicit pantheism which is harmless and without moral value, good or bad: it has no necessary consequence in any conceivable action. But, in the interpretation of American life implied in "The Bridge," there is the current apotheosis of the emotional will in its drive to mastery over mere quantities:

truth is magnitude glimpsed on a remote plane. In his passive receptiveness — which is very different from a sound "wise passiveness" which Mr. Babbitt has misrepresented to the modern mind — and in his rejection of a rational and qualitative will, Crane follows the main stream of romanticism in the last hundred years. Starting with Poe, it came through Baudelaire and Rimbaud to American and English poets of the last generation. If this impulse is dying out, it is as fortunate for its reputation as it is remarkable, that it should be represented at the end by a poetry so rich, finely wrought, and powerful as Hart Crane's.

ALLEN TATE

THORNTON WILDER

THE WOMAN OF ANDROS. *By Thornton Wilder. New York. Albert & Charles Boni.* 1930. $2.50.

Mr. Wilder deals with the "notation of the heart," but he is a literary man for all that. The inspiration behind his three pieces of fiction, and the course of their writing as we have it, does not result so much from direct notation as it does from other literature and from certain general notions which predicate rather than control experience. He is the kind of writer in whom the comment is more important than the thing presented for comment; and his comment itself is of that kind which illuminates the reader more than it does the subject. Poverty and riches are in this method. There is poverty of growing character and there is riches in static characterization. There is riches in textural excellence, poverty in vascular structure. If we ignore what Mr. Wilder does not provide we may be satisfied with the perfection which he exhibits. Some will go further and be deceived, and consider his sermons on the Christian soul to be novels of the thinking heart.

And with this, his last book, deception is rendered easier by the great improvement his style has undergone. *The Cabala* was what is called brilliant writing; it was stocked with wise-cracks, and its extraneity was its essence. *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* was less obviously brilliant, less extraneous to itself in its minute particulars, and its wise-cracks were more often honest epigrams. Both these books were written in segments, and were held together in their guise as novels by the loose concepts suggested in their titles and by the considerations introduced in their opening and closing chapters. Their form, their body, was nothing of which Henry James could have approved. Their subject matter might be described in the *Poetics* but could not be found in the books themselves. In *The Woman of Andros* there is more of a proper theme—the presentation of a certain limit of consciousness—a limit between the boundaries of doubt and faith; and that theme is pretty consistently given the colour of dramatic continuity. The impedimenta of brilliance and epigram have almost dis-

appeared, and we are given instead certain beautiful sayings, sayings which have at their best an air of being distinguished poetic proverbs. Comment generally is simpler, more intensified. The narrative is naturally more convincing, the persons more vivid, the idiom of conversation denser than in the earlier books. A hurried reading, such as the brevity of the book and its spread typography suggest, gives the impression of a sound and beautiful novel.

A second reading reverses the sense of the impression, while somehow keeping its strength. The book remains interesting, and it remains beautiful writing. But it no longer seems to be much of a novel. Although the persons in the book—Chrysis and her sister, and Pamphilus and his father—retain their individuality and what is more important preserve the integrity of their feelings, the book itself is not integral, not individual. It appears to depend for the validity of its final impression upon something not properly part of the book at all, upon something part of the author's mind which has not been digested into the book. There was an ulterior motive in Mr. Wilder's mind which he was not able to merge with the motives of his characters. It is such a motive as the motive of parable, almost that of allegory—either, in its own domain, most proper, but neither fitting the denouement of a tragedy, for in tragedy nothing materially relevant may be left abstract from the lives of the characters.

The nature of Mr. Wilder's failure may be indicated in two ways—by reference to his literary method, and by mention of his prevailing religious preoccupation in relation to his novels.

It does not matter much how loosely or closely Mr. Wilder follows the *Andria* of Terence or the letters of Madame de Sevigné. It does matter a great deal whether what he borrows becomes his own, or whether, on the contrary, it sets up a conflict with what he has in mind. In *The Woman of Andros* (and similarly in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*) there is a conflict; he has borrowed too much to suit his own purposes: there are outcroppings of the sources which interfere with the story being told. Admittedly, this sort of criticism cannot be proved; it can only be felt that some other context would have been better suited to the development of Mr. Wilder's intention. But there is another matter, on much the same level as the use of purely literary sources, and that is the problem of Mr. Wilder's borrowings from himself. Examination of such should penetrate the marrow of

his style. On page eighty-four of *The Woman of Andros* begins the following passage:

It astonished her to find someone laconic in a chattering world and with quiet hands in a gesturing civilization. He was blackened and cured by all weathers. He stood in the squares of the various ports of call, his feet apart as though they were forever planted on a shifting deck. He seemed to be too large for daily life; his very eyes were strange — unaccustomed to the shorter range, too used to seizing the appearances of a constellation between a cloud and a cloud, and the outlines of a headland in rain. . . . He was passing the time and filling the hours in anticipation of release from a life that had lost its savor with the death of his daughter.

In *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, there are some sentences which begin on page 128:

He was blackened and cured by all weathers. He stood in the Square with feet apart as though they were planted on a shifting deck. His eyes were strange, unaccustomed to the shorter range, too used to seizing the appearances of a constellation between a cloud and a cloud, and the outlines of a cape in rain. His reticence was sufficiently explained for most of us by his voyages.

There follows a letter dealing with the death of this man's daughter, ending, "You will laugh at me, but I think he goes about the hemispheres to pass the time between now and his old age."

It is common to castigate writers as much for this kind of pillage as any other, except when the earlier work has been discarded and the resurrection represents a saving. But it may be in Mr. Wilder's case such a castigation would be an injustice. His repetition is merely a natural event in his literary method. It indicates the quality, extent, and value of his inspiration; and it shows us pretty well how he apprehends experience. He is content to reproduce, with an increment of elegance, an old gesture, when his real business lay in the creation of character; and we may take it that he was not only content but positively willing — so sure was he of its effect. Suppose, even, the gesture to be as effective in one instance as in another (which it ought not to be), there remains the question of the value of this kind of gesture in any circumstance. It sounds well, it has a good rhythm, it arouses a sympathetic set of vague feelings and responses: it gives the mind something easy to play with. But it does nowhere near the work of the opening sentences, for example, of *Lord Jim*.

He was an inch, perhaps two, under six feet, powerfully built, and he advanced straight at you with a slight stoop of the shoulders, head forward, and a fixed from-under stare which made you think of a charging bull. Etc.

It is not suggested that Mr. Wilder should write in the style of Conrad; comparison has been introduced instead of argument merely to show how essentially vague, how conventional, is this important aspect of Mr. Wilder's writing. He does not locate himself, or his people, physically. He is engaged in the business of setting up states of mind, not in establishing experience. Having himself had the experience, he takes it as granted that the reader will be satisfied without it. . . . The point is, that it may be fairly stated that all the important images in *The Woman of Andros* are of this general character. The book is not written; it is written about, and it is very true to say that the reader will find in it only what he brings to it — a circumstance which may very well be true of all "literary" books.

The other reason for Mr. Wilder's failure to write a wholly successful novel—namely, the relation of his religious preoccupation to the body of his novel—has been discussed by Edmund Wilson in *The New Republic* for March 26, 1930. In brief, the point is that Mr. Wilder repeats at the end of his book certain sentences with which he began it, to the effect that Christianity was imminent but not yet. On a second reading it becomes increasingly clear that the life and death of Chrysis the hetaira and of her sister Glycerium were the best and noblest that could be had without knowledge of Christian love and salvation. Such judgment, from the point of view of the novel, is obviously *ex post facto*, and cannot directly concern the characters in the book. It is much as if Mr. Wilder should ask us to judge the tragedies of Aeschylus in the light of Christian piety, or the tragedy of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* with relation to the polity of Confucius. Yet Mr. Wilder has so written his book that it is impossible to understand many of its passages and certainly impossible to seize its total significance without some such judgment. It is not that Mr. Wilder's Christian bias is to be complained of, but that he has inserted into the book something so real in itself that it cannot be ignored, and yet such that it cannot be real in terms of the book. The result is that he has thinned the book just where he intended to strengthen it — in its central meaning.

R. P. Blackmur

HORSES AND CHARIOTEER

THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY. *By Robert Bridges. New York. Oxford University Press.* 1930. $3.50.

It is pleasant to praise the wisdom of our elders; it is proper to speak of the virtues of the dead. And when, almost as his dying words, the late Poet Laureate has bequeathed to us a long and serious poem which contains his affirmation of the philosophy and faith which have animated his life, it behooves us to approach that poem with sober respect. This is not the place to assess Dr. Bridges' final reputation as a poet. It is enough to mark the fact that his death, even more definitely than Hardy's, shows us the passing of an epoch. There was always a personal element in Hardy's poems that separated them from the time in which he lived. Dr. Bridges' work was perhaps in the fuller tide of the nineteenth-century spirit; certainly as the more intellectual poet of the two, using more freely certain characteristic abstractions, he exhibits in a more articulate fashion the doctrines by which our fathers lived. It is our task to examine some of these doctrines; if we are led to respectful disagreement, the dead poet, one feels, in his great honesty would have wished that disagreement expressed and would not have cared for a superficial use of the maxim: *"Nil nisi bonum."*

The Testament of Beauty is founded on the four great cornerstones of nineteenth-century poetry: wonder, beauty, love, and science. The poem is permeated both on its surface and in its heart with the feelings, ideas, and facts that have emanated from the laboratory for so many decades. One sees the poet taking theories from biology and physics and manipulating them, expending his talent and mastery over words on these lifeless shapes and converting them into myths for our use. Even radio is assimilated, finely, to the stuff of poetry. With this occupation the poet has imbibed the faith of scientists. In one of his early works he has shown us Prometheus talking with the voice of Thomas Huxley; now in his aristocratic distrust of the mob, he says:

> Well might we ask what Beauty ever coud liv or thrive
> in our crowded democracy under governance
> of such politic fancy as a farmer would show
> who cultivated weeds in hope of good harvest:

> and yet hath modern cultur enrich'd a wasting soil;
> Science comforting man's animal poverty
> and lessening his toil, hath humanized manners
> and social temper.

We recognize a faith that is not ours.

Together with this devotion to a new Messiah is an absorption in its parent, the emotion of wonder. Wonder is "Man's generic mark"; we remember a somewhat different saying from Aristotle. At times this absorption manifests itself in praise of scientific curiosity; more frequently its object is the flower in a crannied wall that we have known in Wordsworth and Whitman. He says of flowers:

> each type a faultless essence of God's will.

This seeming Platonism is not disturbing, but we have to pause before the poet's simple primitivism. Dr. Bridges has ever been an adherent to what we may term the cult of child-worship. In *Prometheus* he has called the child's mind "happy for still unconscious." In *The Growth of Love* he speaks of the passage to manhood as having

> The one thing lost more worth than all the rest,

that is, the charm of a child. Again, looking back upon childhood he realizes that he

> Once dwelt within the gate that angels guard,
> Where yet I'd be had I but heavenly wings.

It is in a like sense that in the same sonnet sequence he interprets Christ's injunction to become like little children. In *The Testament of Beauty* he repeats his conviction:

> Rafaël once venturing to show God in Man
> gave a child's eyes of wonder to his baby Christ.

And:

> a child is ever our nearest picture of happiness.

This devotion reaches full measure in the passage where he states that a child will perforce imitate the most beautiful things.

If these citations help to indicate that this poem in its exterior aspect is concordant with certain typical manifestations of the nineteenth-century spirit we can pass to an examination of the core of doctrine and find the same spirit dominant. The poet's philosophy is

a pantheism — "The mind is indissociable from what it contemplates." Man's mind cannot be isolated from Nature's other works; independence of will cannot separate him off from impercipient existences. Duty is of the same order as natural law. The "Ring of Reality" which is "the created expression of Universal Mind" recurs frequently in the poem. A typical statement is:

> we see Spiritual, Mental and Animal
> to be gradations merged together in growth and mix'd
> in their gradations, and that the animal pleasure
> runneth thru'out all grades.

The Beauty which is the theme of the poem is indiscriminately, one might say ambiguously, a quality both of the objects of carnal lusts and of divine wisdom. The clearest statement of the poet's conception of Beauty is his equation of the Lucretian Venus with it. Venus, for Lucretius a fertility goddess, was as non-moral a spirit as her prototype, Empedocles' φιλότης. Hence Dr. Bridges, as Santayana points out of Lucretius, could have written with equal truth and aesthetic justification a testament of Mars. Here surely is a culmination of the philosophy which the past century so eagerly built up in so many different forms: Shelley's thin pantheism, Bentham's utilitarianism, Hegel's absolutism, the materialism of the post-Darwinian scientists. It was a century so obsessed with the category of continuity that it craved the comfort of knowing that all was one.

We would be willing, I think, to grant the poet this monism; a great poem, the *De Rerum Natura*, has been established upon such a base, and an interesting philosophy, that of Spinoza, has been close in spirit. One would regret that the poet's philosophy was such that those two great motives of human poetry, effort and struggle, could not enter his poem; still, the way was open to him to give this scientific age what it has needed, another Lucretius. We are first disturbed when we discover words and attitudes in use which are the foundation stones of any dualism and which are meaningless in a monist conception of the world. Such words are duty and will and such an attitude is Dr. Bridges' fine aristocratic disdain of democracy and the common mob. Our disturbance grows when we discover that this *mélange de tout* is producing internal discrepancies and inconsistencies in the poet's thought, and we become seriously alarmed when we

discover that the irreconcilables are to be seemingly reconciled by an appeal to a quasi-religion which, although it adopts a Christian formulation, distressingly resembles the most eccentric vagaries of liberal Protestantism.

We may take as an instance of the confusion in the poet's mind his perversion of Plato's myth of the charioteer and the horses in the *Phaedrus*, which is used as framework for the poem. Instead of two horses, one good and one bad, the two horses of the poem, called Selfhood and Breed, are both good. Selfhood through mother love, which is a projection of self, is the fountain of altruistic sentiments equally with Breed. In fact, it is difficult to distinguish Breed from Selfhood, as the poet must have discovered when he came to write the third book, the one on Breed, which is very largely digression. It is not that Plato's words are sacrosanct — we can applaud the poet's condemnation of Plato's socialist Republic — but that Plato's myth seems to us to be truer. Certainly from Dr. Bridges' account we see no need for a charioteer. Selfhood and Breed, being both responsive to Beauty, will mount, it would seem, of their own nature to God, since, as for Beauty:

> being of eternity it overcometh evil
> as any nativ disposition is apt to do.

In fact it is difficult to see that there is any such thing as evil, and, we note, in an enthusiastic moment the poet has cried:

> to the enamoured soul
> evil is irrelevant.

It may seem to be too much in a lawyer-like spirit to exhibit discrepancies in the poet's teachings, but such an exhibition is valuable, both to strengthen our protest against the poet's chief doctrines and at the same time to indicate where his real virtue lies. He rightly forbids us to distinguish "moralities where never is none," that is, in nature, but he says in one place:

> The wise will live by Faith
> faith in the order of Nature and that her order is good.

And in another place he speaks of the "inhumanity of nature's omnipotence." The will is reduced to the passive state of being the harmony between our instincts and intelligence; yet he recognizes that reason,

the charioteer, can "bedizen the rioting joys that fringe the pathways of Hell" and thereby leaves us without the certainty of salvation he has promised us elsewhere. Speaking of the offspring of Selfhood he says:

> blind motherly attraction is the spring
> of purest affection and of all compassion —
> the emotion most inimical to war.

Even Mr. Bertrand Russell knows better than this, as does the poet when later he blames Selfhood for the Great War:

> Reason had lost control of his hot-temper'd steed
> and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness.

One of the strongest notes of the poem is the poet's frequent distrust and scorn for the democratic mob and the humanitarianism which serves it. Yet he can say:

> for surely as mind in man groweth
> so with his manhood groweth his idea of God,
> wider ever and worthier, untill it may contain
> and reconcile in reason all wisdom passion and love,
> and bring at last (may God so grant) Christ's Peace on Earth.

One had thought that the reconcilation of *all* wisdom passion and love was exactly the formula of egalitarian democracy.

Yet it would be ungracious to close with disagreement and to leave the impression that this poem was nothing but illogical confusion. There is much to praise. The mere existence of a long and serious poem is matter for gratitude in these overly lyrical days; the continuity of interest, the refusal to lapse into prose command our admiration. The virtues of the trained craftsman are present in great number: his metre is at one and the same time stately and capable of subtlety; his frequent passages of description are filled with a beauty of imagery that can be compared with Shelley and with a richness of diction that reminds one of Keats. The occasional appearance of true wit, notably in the passage about bees, pleasingly complicates the emotional structure of the poem. And if we are obliged to refuse our assent to the poet's important beliefs yet there are many wise things said to which we can heartily agree. The fine breeding and inherent nobility of soul of an aristocrat frequently speak out. He talks to us calmly

and sanely about war; recognizing its horrors and yet deploring unreasoned pacifism. His condemnation of socialism has gravity and force. It is a masculine voice that tell us:

> Pure Hedonism therefore is confuted off-hand
> and its social pretension is but a will-o-the-wisp
> as if the honest pleasure of a wise man coud lie
> in furthering or conniving at the pleasur of them
> who know not ev'n their own unhappiness, nor how
> ere they can win happiness they must learn wisdom
> by paths difficult and to them unpleasurable.

LAWRENCE LEIGHTON

AN AMERICAN READS BAUDELAIRE

THE CULT OF BEAUTY IN CHARLES BAUDELAIRE. *By S. A. Rhodes, Ph.D. New York. Institute of French Studies, Columbia University.* 1929. 2 Volumes. $3.00.

Dr. Rhodes himself tells us in the introduction to his essay on Baudelaire what he proposes to do. "I have sought," he writes, "to establish a bond between my own perceptions and those of the poet to get at his aesthetic and moral tenets." Dr. Rhodes' essay is very much better than this announcement would lead us to expect. Nowhere in the six hundred pages of the essay do we find such gross distortion of the evidence of Baudelaire's works and words and life as in the earlier apologists; we are not asked to forget that Baudelaire wrote the *Journaux Intimes,* nor to reject as apocryphal the closing verses of the *Crépuscule du Soir, Bénediction,* or *L'Imprévu.* Dr. Rhodes is interested in Baudelaire, and not in the confirmation of his own anterior convictions; he does not, in fact, appear to have such convictions; and he has not only studied the whole of the works of Baudelaire, but read conscientiously of the many and disparate critics. What he writes of Baudelaire is, in consequence, less partial, more just, than what Swinburne wrote, or Gautier, or Mr. Symons, or even Proust. Dr. Rhodes' essay is not perhaps adequate; but it is not misleading.

It is not possible to take Dr. Rhodes' essay with complete seriousness. "For as the Bible affirms," we find in the introduction, "and as André Gide reminds us again, to gain his life man must first renounce it." Throughout the essay we continue to meet with such misfortunes:

> "Life is a grim struggle," wrote M. Romain Rolland . . . "He (Baudelaire) was no partisan of a wishy-washy, spiritless, artless, easy and fluent expression." "A rose under any other name would still be a rose, and nothing could be added to its usefulness by enfolding it within a bunch of vegetables. . . "

It is with this last passage, disconcertingly enough, that Dr. Rhodes opens his discussion of art and morality.

But there are in the essay parts and whole chapters which may profitably be read. In the chapter on the art of writing Dr. Rhodes gives illuminating evidence of Baudelaire's extreme technical solicitude and exigence, evidence from the letters and internal evidence from the translation of Poe and from the successive versions of many of the poems. In the same chapter there are aptly chosen examples of Baudelaire's use of assonance and rhythm. And in the chapter called "The Loves of a Poet," there is a good account of what we know of his relations with women, and of the gradual transmutation of his attitude towards them. There cannot be much doubt now of what that attitude was; it has been defined so clearly by Baudelaire in the poems themselves, in the *Journaux Intimes*, and in the letters to his mother, to Mme. Sabatier, and Marie X. . . And if Dr. Rhodes does not, with his citations from Nietzsche and Freud, add much to our understanding of this attitude — and it is an attitude which, in Baudelaire, is not simple, and wants understanding — he does give an account of it which is recognizably correct. There are other parts of the essay which are adequate; in general Dr. Rhodes is at his best in the denunciation of the errors of earlier critics; for this seems to induce in his writing a certain specificity and vigor. He is very careful to defend Baudelaire against the charge of plagiarism of Poe; and he is quite right in maintaining that he was not essentially derivative from Hugo, that he was not a sadist nor a Manichean, and that only in a very limited and accidental sense could he be called a decadent. Dr. Rhodes is an eclectic; and the validity of many of his observations neither conditions nor is conditioned by the adequacy of the essay as a whole.

But Baudelaire was not an eclectic; and when we find on reading the essay that however much Dr. Rhodes may know about Baudelaire, what Baudelaire saw he does not know, we are invited by what Dr. Rhodes says in his introduction to ask how his failure may be explained by the disparity between his own perceptions and those of the poet. We must remember at this point that what Dr. Rhodes wants to give us, the doctrine, the "*aesthetic and moral tenets*," of Baudelaire, that this must necessarily be an abstraction from Baudelaire's writings. It is not with this program of abstraction that we would quarrel; but in Dr. Rhodes' abstraction something very essential has

been lost. Baudelaire was not a metaphysician nor a moralist, and he was a critic rather than a student of aesthetics: neither in his poems nor in the *Journaux* and letters are there any general statements of doctrine, statements in which the sense is not essentially conditioned by the reference, the diction, the context. It is only by a scrupulous attention to the specific reference that we may understand the unity of Baudelaire's vision, and be able to recognize this unity in passages apparently so disparate as the phrase about M. Ancelle:

Il aime toujours sa femme et sa fille sans en rougir.

and the lines from *Le Balcon*:

Tu te rappelleras la beauté des caresses,
La douceur du foyer et le charme des soirs, . . .

It is for this reason that we deplore Dr. Rhodes' practise of quoting isolated phrases and verses. Now it would not be easy, but it would be possible, to give an account of the doctrine from which Baudelaire's "philosophy" might be derived; it would be above all a Christian doctrine; there are things in Augustine, in Plotinus, even in Longinus, that might in part serve. Such a doctrine would do more than explain Baudelaire's phrases and verses; it would describe a world in which Baudelaire's sensibility, his tastes, his *hygiène, conduite, morale,* become in the full sense intelligible. We should not undertake too readily to find the doctrinal equivalent of the tense and solemn transition of the last verses of *L'Imprévu, Une Charogne, Delphine et Hyppolyte.* And we feel certain that if Dr. Rhodes had really known what Baudelaire was talking of, he would not so casually have written:

Manifestly art cannot pursue an aim contrary to that of a higher morality, since opposition to the spirit of ugliness and evil is the purpose of both.

All means were just to Baudelaire in his search for loveliness and beauty. That is why he honored Satan, because, though defeated, he still dreams of his greatness.

Dr. Rhodes recognizes in Baudelaire that peculiar tonic quality, that extreme tension, which distinguishes him sharply from the romantics, and of which M. du Bos has written so well. But of the character and implications of this tonus Dr. Rhodes is ignorant; re-

peatedly he confuses it with exaltation, with emotion, or with ecstasy. The extreme tension of Baudelaire's life, which is evoked for us by many of the poems, and most completely by *Mon Coeur Mis à Nu*, is not, in my opinion, to be regarded as merely incidental to his perceptions; it is the sign and witness of Baudelaire's negotiation with a real world. It is only as the outcome of this negotiation that the *Fleurs du Mal* are to be understood. When Baudelaire writes:

> Soyez béni, mon Dieu, qui donnez la souffrance
> Comme un divin remède a nos impuretés,
> Et comme la meilleure et la plus pure essence
> Qui prépare les forts aux saintes voluptés.

and Dr. Rhodes adds:

> For sorrow is like a filter through which beauty is purified of its gross materialism, after which it takes on the crystalline radiance of the spirit.

we know that it is not merely by a less fortunate diction that Dr. Rhodes is distinguished from Baudelaire; for there is an irresoluble disparity in the mode and object of the perceptions; and the bond which Dr. Rhodes seeks to establish between them is necessarily of an extreme tenuity. Dr. Rhodes is not tonic; the world, which for Baudelaire was so hard and exigent, has become for him distant and vague. What he has lost in the projection of Baudelaire via his own perceptions is what Baudelaire saw.

We are reminded of Sainte Beuve, and his *pretension touchante de tout comprendre*. Every critic, perhaps, must be wary of such eclecticism; but for the American critic the danger is particularly grave. For few of us, in America, is any world so real or so insistent as Baudelaire's was for him; and if we are to understand his work we may not forget this; for in abstracting from the quality of the poet's conviction, we necessarily corrupt to some extent the sense of what he wrote.

ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

THE RENAISSANCE
A SPIRITUAL COSTUME-HISTORY

A Cultural History of the Modern Age. *By Egon Friedell. Volume I* (1348-1618) *translated from the German by C. F. Atkinson. New York. Alfred A. Knopf.* 1930. $5.00.

More than any other European the German has felt the importance of history. When the theory of evolution was still in its romantic phase, Herder and Hegel dreamed of a history based on imagination; when that theory grew prosaic, Ranke dreamed of a history based on research. During the eighty years which followed it seemed as though the whole learned world had no other object but to see that Ranke's dream came true. In this period knowledge made prodigious strides. The advance was, however, confined to the accumulation of facts and their classification in artificial (and often purely vocational) compartments — to the anatomy of history. Before 1900 the energy of accumulation concentrated chiefly on the anthropological, archaeological, religious, philosophic, architectural, artistic, literary, military, legal, governmental and diplomatic facts. Since 1900 it has spread to economic, social, musical and scientific facts. Were this to go on it might in time be said of history that everything was known and that no one knew anything.

This work corresponds to that in natural history from 1670 to 1750 — a search for quantity and not for quality of knowledge, a postponement of as well as a preparation for understanding. And, just as the first hypotheses of evolution came only after these eighty years of preparation — with Linnaeus and Buffon, just as Harvey came eighty years after Vesalius, so the first physiology of history came only in 1920 — with Spengler. He is premature only in the sense that they were, he is false only in the sense that they were. Who does not remember Dr. Johnson's gibes at Lord Monboddo for seeing men as apes? Yet Monboddo was merely amusing himself with the fantastic

hypothesis of Linnaeus. Ernst Kantorowicz, author of the widely read and widely criticized *Kaiser Friedrich II* (Berlin, 1927), is accused by Albert Brackmann, more than twenty years his senior, of subscribing to the dangerous doctrine that the historian must use his creative imagination (Historische Zeitschrift 140, 548). This certainly is dangerous, but is there any vigorous doctrine which is not? The Soviets think religion dangerous, others fear sex; some fear romanticism, others logic. Many fear truth, because it is life — and life is dangerous. Kantorowicz answers Brackmann, clumsily, as Monboddo might have answered Johnson; then he says a very interesting thing: that the issues raised "contain what are today [1930] perhaps the chief problems agitating the German intelligentia" (Hist. Zeit. 141, 457-8). So historical day-dreams are again in fashion! May the Lord be praised.

After four years of war these younger Germans — Friedell was forty, Spengler thirty-eight and Kantorowicz only twenty-six when the armistice was signed — had almost learned not to fear death. Why then should they fear life? Today when they see a thing marked DANGEROUS, they laugh.

They do not want the skin and bones of history, they do not want knowledge for its own sake any more than did Augustine or Bach. Their grievance against orthodox scholarship is that it is always cautioning — 'wait, careful; ah yes, but not yet.' (See Brackmann Hist. Zeit. 140, 534.) As if accuracy were itself an end. They wish to know the things they need to know inaccurately rather than not at all; they will not postpone their baptism till the Day of Judgment. Ernst von Kahler says he is particularly seeking to distinguish between "what is, and what is not, worth knowing." (*Der Beruf der Wissenschaft*, 29.) And as a sample of orthodox daring Friedell cites the title of a work by a Dr. Jorgen Tesman, "State Research Scholar in Cultural History": *The Domestic Industries of Brabant in the Middle Ages* (42).

To them history is, except for the ephemeral present, all man's reality. The need to understand this reality does not create a 'field of concentration' but an emergency. If history dealt tangibly with reality as does war and medicine so great a discrepancy could not exist. The soldier and doctor must prepare to face not only distant contingencies but immediate crises. They have a faith, but not a blind faith, in re-

search, for they know that their science is at bottom an effort to make reality foolproof, and, where the raw material is man, they know how little so far it has made foolproof.

But if there is the Scylla of centrifugal accumulation there is also the Charybdis of centripedal selection: if historical research is arbitrarily directed towards what is thought worth knowing, we are introducing paternalism in a realm of ephemeral values. Brackmann is right — this sort of thing is dangerous. But can we afford to eschew all discrimination merely because times change? Of what we shall never live to see the unborn can tell us nothing, but of what we may live to see the young can tell us much.

An Austrian, apparently at one time a philologist, more lately an actor, member of the circle once presided over by the poet Peter Altenberg, Egon Friedell, author of the book before us, is evidently not an intellectual like his professed Saxon masters, Nietzsche and Spengler, but a lover and entertainer of men, more careful of sensation than of explanation. His purpose, he says, is "to sketch a series of intellectual and moral pictures, a spiritual costume-history, of the last six centuries, and, at the same time, to show the Platonic Idea of each age which inwardly moved its thought and was its soul" (24). The first two volumes were published in 1928 and the last is promised shortly, but we shall deal here only with the first — from 1348-1618 — according to the very recent English translation.

Intimidated by science, the orthodox school has tended more and more to believe that the causes of things are material and concrete. Encouraged by his dislike of this school, and by his love of art, Friedell assures us that, on the contrary, the causes of things are spiritual and abstract (20 and 26-27). In both cases it is a matter of temperament, for neither has honestly tried to prove his case by a free admission of evidence and a wise weighing and sifting. Friedell's belief — that the articulation of a Platonic Idea conceived in the brain of a man of genius is the *primum mobile* — is as likely a hypothesis as the other; but we may doubt whether he has reached this belief by strictly scientific methods. For we catch him saying that human evolution was due to man's "very inadequate physical weapons; which led him to create for himself the weapon of reason" (64); whereas he should, to be consistent, have insisted that it was the ape man's cunning which led to the atrophy of his physical weapons.

Apparently, however, this is only a slip of the pen, because the ignominy of being moulded by a physical cause is not visited on any of the ape man's children. Henceforth the Platonic Idea in the mind of a genius is the unchallenged mistress of human destiny. The process is somewhat after this fashion: the Ideas of an earlier age irritate the minds of the young geniuses; as they grow up they articulate their feelings, and their less talented contemporaries — and also all nature apparently — succumb to the new revelation. For instance, "women become . . . broad-hipped and full-bosomed because Rubens at his lonely easel so willed it" (26); and "the new age — modernity — came first, and it was through it that the Plague [of 1348] happened" (81). Thus, on the same principle, classical literature and art were rediscovered because of man's rediscovered admiration for himself (177); thus a liking for the sensuous world caused scientific invention and the rise of capitalism (98 and 95); thus the age of discovery was the effect of the realization that travel was, after all, a pleasure (213). This is the talk of an intelligent man who is drunk: it is half true and half nonsense. One might quite as well read Einstein and then conclude that Rubens caused the Black Plague. As for travel, it probably had become pleasanter, but surely this was partly due to tabular lists of compass deviations, to the blocking of the Oriental trade-routes, to the early fourteenth-century discovery (communicated by Marco Polo to Peter of Abano) that the equatorial zone was thickly inhabited, and to other material and concrete causes. Man's liking for himself and for the sensuous world, on the other hand, may well have been the causes he claims they were.

It is hard not to be impatient with such a clutter as this: Friedell is here neither sound nor inspired, but only garrulous. He would hardly try to prove that the egg is always, and the hen never, a cause; yet what else is he doing here but, like a small boy, answering the orthodox affirmation of 'hen, hen, hen,' with an equally silly 'egg, egg, egg'?

It is only as Friedell gets clear of his own Platonic Ideas and begins to tell his story that he shows his mettle. After an over-elaborate, 'scientific' analysis of the fourteenth-century "traumatic neurosis" — a kind of shell shock — of which the Black Plague was merely a symptom, he develops the idea that Occam's nominalism — which alleges the reality of the concrete particular — was the true cause of

incipient modernity, "the most weighty fact in modern history" (89). He cites as some of its effects the *realpolitik* of the Hapsburgs (131 and 157), the rise of the merchants, craftsmen and condottieri (96-98 and 157), and the realism of the literature which did not spare knighthood and chivalric love (99-100 and 156). This is all well enough, and needed resaying, but he does not explain why this age was also that of the great German and English mysticism, and he fails to add the empiricism in science and economics (of Occam, Oresme and many more), the Post-Glossators who refused to worship Roman Law, or (though he mentions it on page 118) Wyclif's doctrine of the Eucharist. Intellectually he is too relaxed.

Much later, and apropos of nothing in particular, Friedell says, very neatly, that "post-Christian humanity has one vast superiority over the man of antiquity — it has a bad conscience" (272). Such a statement, to introduce the late fourth-century Roman, would have been magnificent; and it would have been hardly less effective had he had the wit to observe that it was the loss of that bad conscience which caused the Renaissance. Never was virtue more cherished than by the early humanists, but it was a new virtue, one found only in classical texts, where it was wedded to self-respect and a life of honor in the lay world. That honesty is the best policy is a worldly maxim, which Rome knew, and which Bruni and Poggio echoed.

Friedell is anything but wary: he dodges the nineteenth-century view that witchcraft was a revival of pagan superstition only to be trapped by the twentieth-century obsession with sex repression (285). All the old texts called witchcraft Devil worship. Why should we be so sure they were wrong? At least the age was still Christian enough. And possibly it is something more than a coincidence that it arose in the early fifteenth century, with man's rising self-respect. To Dante as to Augustine, as we know, the depravity of man was ample to account for all the evil in the world — the evil man did not cause directly he caused indirectly by calling down God's wrath. The Renaissance denied man's depravity and so the severity of God's chastisement, but evil it could not deny; the lion's share of the responsibility for evil was therefore laid at the Devil's door. If not in Luther — who clung to Augustine — at least in Loyola and in the legend of Faust, the Devil not only reaps the fruits of human malice, he instigates it. Playing cunningly to his victim's weakness, he traps him. The Jesuit

Order was formed to combat not man's, but the Devil's, malice. That is why it seemed so fair to be unfair. A pact with the Devil brought earthly blessings, and earthly blessings, like Friedell's travel, were a pleasure now. And this same belief which produced the witch renewed the Inquisition. In the early Middle Ages God's tool had been the Devil, to punish the evil in man; now His tool was man, to counteract the evil of the Devil.

Speaking of Italian Renaissance art Friedell characteristically grazes, but just misses, the point: he says that it "was in part called into being by scientific discussion" (182), but he does not say, as he so properly might, that its meticulous imitation of nature was the culminating preliminary phase which was about to usher in strictly scientific observation. Leonardo is the key to this phase. In him first were the inventor and the painter combined to form the modern man of science.

The next period — of the earlier sixteenth century — is well characterized: in the Platonic Idea of Ariosto, Michelangelo and Guilio Romano, and in the costume of their day, man saw himself a giant — massive and grandiose. Venus and Apollo were eclipsed by Juno and Jupiter (178 and 345). And this in turn raised the very acute problem of how these newly found natural resources of man might be capitalized and exploited: utilitarianism and opportunism were now directed towards the outer, temporal world. As Alberti had analyzed the family, so Castiglione analyzed society and Machiavelli the state, each in his own way raising the problem of how men should behave towards each other (248 and 272). And Friedell well shows how anxious Luther was to make Christianity more efficient and useful (248). Man's behavior towards nature was also seen from a new angle: if it were his destiny to enslave and harness nature to serve his ends, which was both good pagan and good Christian teleology, he must study how nature was made and how she functioned. By some such process modern empirical science was born, and that empiricism, applied to religion, led also to the Protestant return to the sources of revelation, and to the Catholic return — at the Council of Trent — to the sources of authority. Like the Jesuits, like Calvin, Saint Teresa found that experience, rather than logic or tradition, furnished the soundest gloss to the sacred texts.

It was only when man made bold to mould nature to his will that

he fully realized her power. In 1540 came the apotheosis of man's capacity (200) — Rabelais and Loyola share the illusion; in 1580 came the apotheosis of nature's capacity and a renewed realization of man's impotence. As nature waxed, God and the Devil, to the extent that they could not identify themselves with nature, waned. This was a further incentive to empirical science: as nature rose the artificial frame of antiquity fell: Aristotle swayed and crashed (329-39), Roman law, after Cujas (1572), was made the humble servant of custom, the Latin language gave way before the vernaculars, the relativity of values — of morals, of laws, of ideas — were ever recurring themes.

Then came the third phase — and the last of this volume: in 1540 nature was a submissive tool, in 1580 a voluptuous mistress, in 1615 she became a wild and often brutal enemy. The disillusion was gradual. It began with the cosy scepticism of Montaigne and the religious neutrality of William of Orange, Elizabeth and Henry IV (318); it continued with the uneasy reconciliation to paradox by Bellarmin and Giordano Bruno (319); and it culminated in Shakespere's dramatization of life's inexplicability, in Caravaggio's wild chiaroscuros (346), and in Europe's adoption of the gloomy costume of Spain (314). Montaigne and *Hamlet* illustrate two successive phases of helplessness in the face of reality: Montaigne cannot act because he knows too little; Hamlet cannot act because he knows too much (344).

It was just at this moment that the Copernican theory, conceived some eighty years earlier, began to win recognition. Friedell says "it is one of the greatest falsifications of history to harp again and again on the idea that the heliocentric system made man more modest and humble, for the contrary is the truth" (212). The personal hypothesis of Copernicus, born in 1473, probably was, as Friedell intimates, a product of Renaissance daring, but he forgets that it began to carry conviction only in these disillusioned days of Bruno and Galileo.

If we cared, like Friedell, to be very clever and inaccurate we might say that in place of the theoretical utilitarianism of 1540 there was now concrete abstraction. In place of Don Quixote himself appeared Cervantes' picture of him. The turn of the century witnessed a tremendous advance in mathematics, physics and astronomy — the three most metaphysical sciences. It was no longer mercenary or even

utilitarian work: nature no longer merely offered a convenient tool, but a new metaphysics. The only inventions of this very scientific age were the telescope and microscope — in order that man might see and so know nature the better. Friedell says that Francis Bacon thought "new discoveries . . . the less valuable the more they lead to mere profit instead of to the illumination of nature" (334).

In this summary I have tried to make Friedell's account consecutive and sensible. To do this it has been necessary to detach one statement here, another there, to arrange these in some sort of order and patch the holes then still remaining with such of my own views as were most sympathetic with his. I have tried to corroborate as well as to correct. The only methodical part of the book is an alphabetical index of proper names — why he chose to make it alphabetical I cannot say. Like so many books of our day it is more brilliant than comprehensible, more careless than original. These sins are venial; but they are not the only ones — there is another sin which is not. Over the whole book hangs a curse — the curse of pride: Friedell will not break his bread with ordinary men. Because professional historians are a class, and so their work for the most part ordinary work done by ordinary minds, what they do is therefore wrong, what they think is false. Because they take infinite pains, struggle to be impartial, and check or repress their intuitions, he carefully avoids mastering his subject (15-16 and 37), analyzing his prejudices, running down the clues his intuition suggests. He condemns science (22 and 321) and lauds art (21), in his ire forgetting that the historical mind is as distinguishable from the one as from the other. Some of the qualifications of an historian he has: a vigorous and versatile curiosity, good psychological intuitions, a sense that there are values, a love of theories and causes. But many other qualifications he lacks: deep respect for facts, a delight in lucid, cold-blooded demonstration, hatred of intellectual pride and prejudice, and, above all, sensitiveness to geography and chronology. Without these last, history is like romance without sex, science without a laboratory. In geography his interest is spasmodic: he treats fifteenth-century Italy in a special chapter, he sees Luther as a product of the Latin world's periphery (244), he distinguishes the Latin from the Teutonic genius (169), he hates the Spaniard (217 and 223), he differentiates the English from the continental country house (316 and 324); but his unit is more usually the whole of western Europe.

By simplifying the process he confuses the result. His carelessness of chronology is worse: he cites the mentality of Frederick II who died in 1250, and the story of *Meier Helmbrecht*, written in about 1252, to illustrate the sudden change after 1348 (92-93); he cites the age-long preoccupation with Antichrist as another symptom of this new state of mind (111); he cites Alberti, born in 1404, to show the change after 1500 (176); he speaks of Plateresque architecture, whose peak was in 1530, as the effect of Philip II's accession in 1555 (313); and he says that the gold-fever caused by the influx from America in turn caused "new sources of the noble metals" to be discovered "and brought under exploitation by improved mining technique" (224). Yet we know that this improved technique dates from the year 1475, and that the increase in production resulting had already raised prices two hundred per cent by 1550 — the first year when American gold began to be imported in quantity.

How can one man, in one book, say so many wise and so many foolish things? Evidently because it amuses him. To the wary and over-fed professional — who won't read the book — I highly recommend it; to the guileless and hungry amateur — who will read it — I cannot recommend it at all. Like a temptation of the Devil it can do good only to those equipped to parry and resist.

E. M. Pickman

HUMANISM

HUMANISM AND AMERICA. *Edited by Norman Foerster. New York. Farrar & Rinehart.* 1929. $3.50.
THE CRITIQUE OF HUMANISM. *Edited by C. Hartley Grattan. New York. Brewer & Warren.* 1930. $3.50.

The controversy over Humanism, as it now stands, is summed up in two volumes, *Humanism and America* and *The Critique of Humanism*. The dust-cover of the first carries the following battle-cry: "THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURE TO THE ANARCHY OF OUR TIMES!" and the *Critique* proclaims itself, in large red letters, "THE CHALLENGE OF THE CREATIVE LIFE TO THE SCHOOLMEN OF OUR DAY." In a way it is very exhilarating to find publishers so excited about general ideas; still, one is glad that the writers themselves, with the exception of Mr. Munson of the Humanists and Mr. Rascoe of the Anti-Humanists, are content to leave rhetoric and invective to the columnists and the publicity men. The tone of the discussion, indeed, is remarkably high, though signs of repressed anger are not lacking. It is hard to see the reason for the anger, as the question at issue is ill-defined. It is even difficult to see why Mr. Eliot's essay should be in the Humanist volume, and Mr. Chamberlain's in the Anti-Humanist. Perhaps Mr. Bandler, who has an essay in each volume, provides the clue in a note to his essay in the *Critique of Humanism*:

> As I understand it the discussion is about ideas, not words, personalities, or parties: both groups favor humanism, but differ in their interpretation of it. . . . Since the two volumes are complementary, there is no need to explain a change which does not exist.

Read in this light — i.e., as parts of a symposium on humanism — these two books assume an importance which they would utterly lack if considered separately. For the humanists have nothing to offer here which had not already been sufficiently explained by Professor Babbitt; and the Anti-Humanists, one fears, would have little to say if they did not have the formidable Professor Babbitt to attack. The Humanists are fairly well united behind his doctrine, and their op-

ponents have in common an interest in his ideas, which they have all studied and many of them digested; plus a dissatisfaction with its limitations, most of which are traceable to the fact that he is a Harvard professor. It is significant that of the thirteen critics of Humanism, only two are in universities, while of the fifteen contributors to *Humanism and America*, only three are outside the universities. Most of the Humanists are professors who have done little but apply the master's formulae: most of their opponents are writers outside the academic pale who are trying to utilize Humanism in their struggles with a very unregenerate environment. Most of them profess an interest in Humanism with a small h, while sturdily denouncing the dogma. In many ways they better deserve the title of the second generation of Humanists (whether they like it or not) than the strict professors of the faith assembled behind Professor Babbitt.

I have said that the issue was ill-defined. But the critics of Humanism agree in stressing three departments of human life which their opponents have dealt with incompetently or not at all: love, the fine arts, and contemporary America. It is asserted on all sides that the Humanists are Puritans in disguise: and three of their critics rush valiantly to defend Goethe's right to have love affairs at seventy. The third time one encounters this point, one begins to fear that such an exaggerated sensitiveness betrays a spirit hardly less narrow and doctrinaire than that of Professor Babbitt himself, whose remark that "Anyone who thinks of Goethe's love affairs prolonged into the seventies is scarcely likely to maintain that his *Entsagung* was of a very austere character," was sufficient to raise this storm. The critics have much more tangible evidence on their side when they come to demonstrate the inadequacy of the Humanists as critics of the fine arts. Mr. Henry-Russell Hitchcock has a very good essay on Humanist criticism of painting, sculpture and architecture. Mr. Cowley, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Winters, Mr. Mumford, and almost all of the other Anti-Humanists show how the Humanist preoccupation with ethical problems has blinded them to the beauties of poetry, and even caused them to develop a distorted conception of the place and function of the arts. The present group of professing Humanists have failed to display an even average awareness of beauty. All this is serious enough; but even more fundamental is the unanimous criticism that they are incapable of dealing with their immediate environment. When they treat the

literature of the past they are weak on the esthetic side; when they steal a fleeting glance at contemporary literature they are quite lost. Professor More's celebrated failure to appreciate *Ulysses*, *The Waste Land*, and *Manhattan Transfer* is cited again and again. In just the same way they fail as critics of contemporary society.

These three limitations of orthodox Humanism, or at least of the orthodox Humanists, go far toward showing us their true place and importance. They are due I believe to the doctrine's academic birth and up-bringing. No one quite succeeds in transcending his environment completely. The literary men who live in New York are likely to be provincial in other respects, partly because they do not have enough of some of the influences that have formed Professors Babbitt and More. As Mr. Eliot ominously remarks toward the end of his essay,

> I believe that at the present time the problem of the unification of the world and the problem of the unification of the individual are in the end one and the same problem; and the solution of one is the solution of the other.

Having come so far with the critics of the Humanists, there still remains the doctrine itself to discuss; for as I understand Professor Babbitt, he claims to provide one with a set of standards, a method, and a point of view which would be useful in contemporary life, rather than a direct criticism of modern art and life. At this point one is in danger of entering a thick tangle of dialectic in search of an exactness which is impossible in the nature of the case. The most one can hope to do is to sketch a very rough map of the terrain in order to point out the positions of the chief writers.

Professor Babbitt attempts to set up an individualism based upon the ethical will, the *frein vital*, or the power to choose intelligently; a power the possession of which is supposed to set man apart from the rest of nature. Mr. Grattan, summoning Professor Dewey to his aid, rejects this dualism, and with it the whole Humanist doctrine: "This position," he say, meaning Professor Dewey's, "entirely eliminates the possibility of a discontinuity between the human and the natural." Mr. Grattan makes this assertion in the name of science, the authority of which he is concerned to save. By a process of reasoning which I am unable to follow, he persuades himself that while man can be fully

described in scientific terms, he still saves the possibility of values. But when he comes to assigning the exact role of science in the establishment and maintaining of value, he falls back on a pious profession of faith which is surely vaguer than anything Professor Babbitt signs his name to: "The extension of the experimental technic into the human and social realms is bound to be the most fruitful adventure of modern times." The interesting point about Mr. Grattan's essay is his recognition of the need of values at all. In this respect as well as in his interest in science he is close to Mr. Hazlitt. The latter is clearer; he does not pretend to give a very water-tight structure to support his hopes, and he is at least certain that "Physics can never be made into an explanation of the universe." Both of them seem to believe that values may somehow be discovered by scientific methods, much as the "laws" of physics and chemistry are discovered. But the authority of a chemical "law" is only momentary; it is lost the moment a better formulation is found; the real authority which they here invoke is the authority of the scientific method, which depends upon the elimination of human needs and desires as factors.

Mr. Mumford, while not making a very formal profession of faith, also seems to reject the Humanist dualism. Like the two other writers, he asks that the findings and methods of science be treated with more respect, and he wants the human being to be allowed to "expand" as well as refrain. He writes very smoothly, and most of what he says is so true, and so unobtrusively expressed, that one is willing to go along with him very contentedly until brought up short by such a statement as the following: "In our conceptions of Nature and Man and Society and Personality we have now arrived, I think, at a somewhat deeper and richer understanding of the relationships than either the New Mechanism or the New Humanism have any notion of." Ten pages of suave generalities, and behold: a deeper and richer understanding than is to be found in the collected works of Dewey, Beard, Babbitt and More. Mr. Mumford, like Mr. Cowley in a much smaller degree, is too easily satisfied with poetical reflections. Perhaps they are artists rather than thinkers. Perhaps they have somehow inherited the Transcendentalist penchant for abstract wisdom, for if the Humanists may be reproached with holding a doctrine which has yet to prove its usefulness in dealing with the contemporary scene, most of their critics may be reproached with holding no intelligible doctrine

at all. Thus Mr. Cowley — whose well-written essay contains many remarks of real insight — ends on a note of poetic nostalgia: "And what, in turn, has Humanism to do with the scene outside my window: with the jobless men who saunter in the dusk, or the dying village, or the paper mill abandoned across the river — this mill whose owners have gone south where labor is cheap?" Mr. Mumford works up to a prophetic vision of ultimate reconciliation: "In our new bed, Romanticist and Classicist, 'Humanist' and Mechanist, naturalist and idealist will lie down happily together; but they must cast off, before they do so, the soiled and tattered philosophical clothes in which they now parade." This is what I mean by saying that without the Humanists the Anti-Humanists would have nothing to talk about.

Probably the most serious consideration of Humanism is to be found in Mr. Tate's essay, *The Fallacy of Humanism*, which has already been published in nearly the same form in the *Criterion* and *The Hound & Horn*. Mr. Tate agrees with Mr. Eliot's well-known criticism of Humanism, that the ethical will lacks authority without religion. This fundamental point may be approached in a number of ways. One may show, as has so often and so convincingly been done, the actual failure of professing Humanists to deal authoritatively with their own day and time. One may attack the theory of the ethical will, demonstrating that without the authority of revelation or an accepted tradition it is subject to attack like that of Mr. Hazlitt. One may show how the Humanist preoccupation with the individual will blinds them to esthetic considerations and to the historical and cultural background which makes a work of art possible. This is the most important point of all, for the Humanists, if they do anything, must claim to occupy a position so central that the problems of society and the arts may be fully surveyed from it.

The trouble is that in the present society they do not actually occupy such a position: they do not have an organized society with a publicly accepted scale of values behind them. Historically, one is told by those who seem to know, Humanism has always been the result of a long religious discipline. Most of these objections are summed up as follows:

As M Ramon Fernandez has recently said, with Aristotelian tact, Humanism should not pretend to be a "Body of Doctrine"; it is a "resultant situation."

The American Humanists have tried to make the resultant situation its

own background, because they lack the resultant situation itself. Humanism . . . tries to take a short-cut to the resultant situation, and ignores the social difficulty of making or reconstructing an appropriate background. It ignores the philosophical difficulty of imagining what the background should be; it is an effort to imitate by rote the natural product of culture; it is a mechanical formula for the recovery of civilization.

I have not attempted in this brief notice to do more than indicate briefly the main lines taken by the chief contributors to a discussion which is by now familiar to readers of *The Hound & Horn*. Several of the essays are important quite apart from their bearing on Humanism, notably Mr. Hitchcock's and Mr. Winters'. As I remarked above, even if one does not believe that the Humanists have found the answer, one must be grateful to them for starting a discussion of fundamental questions.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

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